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Teacher Perceptions of the Use of School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports at Reducing the Presence of Bullying in Middle Schools

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The University of Southern Mississippi

TEACHER PERCEPTIONS OF THE USE OF SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTIONS AND SUPPORTS AT REDUCING THE PRESENCE OF BULLYING IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS

by

Kristine Marie Harper

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

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Each day students throughout the world are exposed to bullying in many different ways and on many different occasions. Bullying has received such a great amount of attention through the media, that it leaves parents and community members with the belief that bullying has become a bigger problem today than it ever has before (Austin, Reynolds, & Barnes, 2012; Carrera, DePalma, & Lameiras, 2011; Packman, Lepkowski, Overton, & Smaby, 2005; Rigby & Smith, 2011). Nearly every state in the nation has passed laws regarding bullying and increasing the responsibility of schools and districts to implement programs to prevent and/or address bullying on their campuses (U.S. .Department of Education, 2011). Many schools and districts have not only developed policies to place them in compliance with the passed legislation, but they have begun to implement programs, such as School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS), as a method to help improve the overall school environment (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012; Reinke, Herman, & Stormont, 2012; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). While it has shown to help improve the overall school climate, researchers suggest that this may also be utilized to reduce the presence of bullying in schools (Good, McIntosh, & Gietz, 2011; Packman et al., 2005; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012).

This study examined the perceptions of middle school teachers concerning the use of SWPBIS in their schools, along with their perceptions of its effectiveness at reducing the presence of negative student behaviors, such as bullying. Research was conducted using quantitative data to determine teacher perceptions of the questions being presented in this study. While the outcomes to nearly all of the research questions reported very little significance, these results showed that teachers' perceived that SWPBIS is effective at reducing the presence of negative student behaviors within the school when it has been implemented with fidelity.

The University of Southern Mississippi

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DEDICATION

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to my husband, Chris. You have been my rock and voice of reason for so many years that it would have been impossible to complete this without your support and encouragement throughout this entire process. I don't know if I could have made it through all of these years of education without you by my side, I can't wait to see what we can continue to accomplish together. I would like to thank my parents, James and Donna Pilon, for their continued support and for teaching me the value of hard work and dedication. I would also like to thank my friends and family who have continued to encourage me to work hard to reach my goals, your encouragement will always continue to motivate me. Lastly, I would like to thank all of my current and former students, I hope that I have been able to be an example of what you can accomplish when you are willing to work hard to accomplish your goals.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Bullying within the schools has become a serious problem that many students face each day, whether they are the victim or the witnesses of it (Mehta, Cornell, Fan, & Gregory, 2013; Packman et al., 2005). The issue of bullying is not new. However, the increased awareness has created an increase in the overall demand for action to be taken in order to reduce or eliminate it (Austin et al., 2012; Carrera et al., 2011; Packman et al., 2005; Rigby & Smith, 2011). This need for action has led 46 states to enact laws that address bullying in schools. These laws require schools and school districts to develop bullying policies that include at least some of the following components: reporting, investigating, and school personnel training (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

Bullying is an intentional form of rule breaking and a pattern of anti-social behaviors that can occur in any location in multiple ways. The large number of ways that bullying behaviors can take makes it difficult to pinpoint what is occurring in a particular situation (Good et al., 2011; Olweus, 2011). Additionally, there is not any one particular behavior that can always be looked upon as being a bullying type behavior due to the differing ways that each person's action may be intended. The same holds true for what one individual may view as bullying type behaviors compared to another individual (Carrera et al., 2011). The same behavior can be examined differently, one person may see it as perfectly normal and acceptable while another may make an opposing determination and view it as bullying (Yerger & Gehret, 2011). When outside observers are unable to agree in identifying specific bullying behaviors, the chances for corrective actions to take place will diminish and may lead to a greater likelihood that the situation

will occur again (Austin et al., 2012; Lansford et al., 2012; Low, Polanin, & Espelage, 2013; Olweus, 2011; Sherer & Nickerson, 2010).

Developing a better understanding of what bullying behaviors may look like can be one of the most crucial steps to be taken to identify and address bullying. The first form, physical bullying, is the exchange of physical aggression between the bully and victim (Aluede, Adelke, Omoike, & Afen-Akpaida, 2008; Coyne, Linder, Nelson & Gentile, 2012; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). This form is frequently perceived as being direct physical violence between the bully and his or her victim, and it may include indirect forms of aggression such as destruction of the victim's belongings (Aluede et al., 2008; Bradshaw & Waasdorp, 2009; Frisén, Jonsson, & Persson, 2007; Terranova, Harris, Kavetski, & Oates, 2011; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). The second form, verbal bullying, is the use of verbal interactions, such as name calling and teasing, to cause emotional harm to the victim (Aluede et al., 2008; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). The third form, relational aggression, is the use of social manipulation in order to damage the victim's reputation and social relationships (Coyne et al., 2012; Gentile, Coyne, & Walsh, 2011; Lansford et al., 2013; Low et al., 2013). This form of bullying may take place through the use of non-confrontational means and requires more careful thought and planning by the bully in order to carry out the negative actions (Aluede et al., 2008; Coyne et al., 2012; Gentile et al., 2011; Lansford et al., 2013; Low et al., 2013; Packman et al., 2005). The last form, cyberbullying, is the use of electronic media, such as computers and cell phones, to cause repeated harm to the victim (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Schneider, O'Donnell, Stueve, & Coulter, 2012). This form has become more common as a result of the false sense of anonymity that it provides an

individual causing them to think that they cannot be identified and held responsible for their actions (Aluede et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Schneider et al., 2012; Yerger & Gehret, 2011).

Identifying and addressing bullying behaviors as they occur is important in order for schools to be proactive in taking control of the immediate presence of the problem. Identifying these behaviors is also important to develop a better determination of any patterns that may be present (Bambara, Goh, Kern, & Caskie, 2012; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Reinke et al., 2012; Simonsen et al., 2012). Making this determination can help identify specific problem areas that need to be targeted and addressed to design and implement more effective interventions. This process is a crucial step that must be taken by districts and schools located in states that have passed legislation requiring the development of district and/or school-based bullying policies (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). School and district administrators must examine multiple types of programs aimed towards addressing bullying and problematic behaviors while providing needed supports for students and teachers (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012; Reinke et al., 2012; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). According to Reinke et al. (2012), nearly 14,000 schools in the United States implemented universal programs, such as School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) as a method of meeting the needs required by state bullying laws. SWPBIS provides support for the positive behaviors that students exhibit while providing remediation for negative behaviors, such as bullying (Bambara et al., 2012; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Reinke et al., 2012; Simonsen et al., 2012). Research conducted by Reinke et al. has shown that universal programs such as

SWPBIS have been effective in reducing problem behaviors, increasing positive behaviors, and increasing academic performance.

SWPBIS is not a program that requires schools to follow very specific step-by-step instructional lessons and activities for implementation. It is a framework for schools to utilize, establish, and enhance an overall positive school climate based upon their particular needs and demographics (Fallon, O'Keeffe, & Sugai, 2012; MacDonald & McGill, 2013; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Reinke et al., 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996; Wright & McCurdy, 2011). Decisions regarding specific activities and interventions to be used at the school level are developed by the school's multi-disciplinary leadership team. These decisions are made on the basis of both past and current school-wide student data. The emphasis placed on using this data is similar to the requirements of the Response to Intervention (RTI) process. This process includes the use of "universal screening, continuous progress monitoring, data-based decision making, adoption of evidence-based interventions and practices, early intervention and prevention, specialized and fluent content knowledge, and implementation integrity" (Fallon et al., 2012, p. 209). Using past and present student data enables the leadership team to determine the presence of a pattern in behaviors that may or may not be specific to one particular student (Fallon et al., 2012). Data may be used to make predictions from the patterns present, which allows for further examination to determine actions to be taken to help prevent future occurrences (Irvin et al., 2006; Newton, Algozzine, Algozzine, Horner, & Todd, 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Similar to the RTI process, SWPBIS uses a three-tier approach, with all students being placed at Tier 1 (Miramontes, Marchant, Heath, & Fischer, 2011). This tier

emphasizes teaching and implementing the school and classroom rules and expectations while focusing on the desired positive behaviors expected of all students and teachers within the school (Miramontes et al., 2011, Fallon et al., 2012, Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011, Walker et al., 1996). In order to begin implementing Tier 1, obtaining faculty buy-in of at least 80% is a key component in determining the active implementation of the interventions and expectations by the teachers (Flannery, Sugai, & Anderson, 2009; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Richter, Lewis, & Hagar, 2012; Simonsen et al., 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 2009). Students who exhibit deficits in specific behavioral areas require additional attention and interventions, similar to students who struggle academically, and would then be placed at Tier 2 (Fallon et al., 2012; Newcomer, Freeman, & Barrett, 2013; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996). Placement at Tier 2 would be determined by the leadership team's review of office discipline referral (ODR) data to determine specific students who struggle with specific behaviors (Irvin et al., 2006; Newton et al., 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2002). These students are provided with small group interventions specific to their needs in order to remediate these deficits; using this approach also helps these students begin to experience success with their behavior (Newcomer et al., 2013; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Scott, Alter, Rosenberg, & Borgmeier, 2010).

Despite the best efforts in both Tiers 1 and 2, a small percentage of students may continue to struggle and require an additional level of individualized support found at Tier 3. Students who would be placed on Tier 3 exhibit chronic or severe behavioral problems and require the use of interventions that are individualized and specific to their unique needs (Fallon et al., 2012; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Richter et al., 2012; Sugai &

Horner, 2002). Tier 3 interventions need a comprehensive assessment of the problematic behaviors in order to determine the antecedents and consequences that are reinforcing and maintaining the negative behaviors. These assessments would aid in determining the best approach towards changing and shaping the problematic behavior to one that is more desirable (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011).

Universal programs, such as SWPBIS, have shown to provide multiple benefits towards fostering an overall positive school environment by producing benefits for both students and teacher while reducing a significant source of stress for teachers (Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Reinke et al., 2012). However, research does not indicate if SWPBIS is effective in addressing bullying within the schools, which in part could determine if a school is in compliance with all aspects of their state's bullying law. Statement of the

Statement of the Problem

Teachers and administrators continue to work toward improving the overall climate and the community's perceptions of the school through the use of SWPBIS. SWPBIS is used to model and teach the desired student behaviors, but also further addresses negative behaviors through additional levels of remediation as needed on an individualized basis (Chitiyo, Makeweche-Chitiyo, Park, Ametepee, & Chitiyo, 2011; Irvin et al., 2006; Miramontes et al., 2011; Richter et al., 2011; Simonsen et al., 2012). While community perceptions of the school is one of the top priorities of school administrators, the increased public awareness, along with the passage of legislation, surrounding the presence of bullying in schools presents an additional challenge (Austin et al., 2012; Carrera et al., 2011; Packman et al., 2005; Rigby & Smith, 2011). Researchers have suggested the potential for using SWPBIS to address bullying within

the schools by using the same approach, but with interventions geared towards addressing bullying behaviors (Good et al., 2011; Packman et al., 2005).

This study examines the implementation of SWPBIS within the middle schools by teachers and administrators who are involved with the implementation of the interventions. The study examines the perceptions that teachers and administrators hold towards that the use of SWPBIS within their school and how it has affected the presence of bullying over the last several years. Teachers are directly involved in the implementation of the primary level interventions that all students receive, in addition to frequently being the first who respond to incidents of bullying as they are occurring or that students are reporting.

This study also examines the teachers' level of involvement in the planning stages of SWPBIS and if they perceive that their feedback from implementation is reviewed and taken into consideration by the planning committee. With teachers being the front and direct line of implementation, their feedback is vital for the desired goals of SWPBIS to be reached. This feedback is particularly important if SWPBIS is utilized to make changes to improve the school's climate and reduce the presence of bullying. If the teachers' perceive that their feedback is not valued then the fidelity of the interventions they are expected implement will not be implemented at the level that is needed in order to achieve the desired goals for the school and community expectations.

Research Questions

The following research questions will be examined in this study:

1. To what extent does a teacher's age, gender, level of education, and years of teaching experience affect their perceptions of student outcomes as a result of SWPBIS?
2. To what extent does a teacher's perception of their involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS affect their perceptions in regards to reducing the presence of bullying by using positive reinforcing behaviors?
3. To what extent does a teacher's perceptions regarding their past experience with bullying affect their perception of the current presence of bullying in their school? How does a teacher's gender or age have an effect on their perceptions?
4. To what extent does a teacher's perceptions of the fidelity in the implementation of SWPBIS and their perceptions of the effect it has toward reducing students' negative behaviors? How does a teacher's gender or the size of the school they teach in have an effect on their perceptions?

Research Hypotheses

The following Hypotheses will be examined in this study:

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's age, gender, level of education, and years of teaching experience and their perceptions of student outcomes as a result of SWPBIS.

H2: There is a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS and their perceptions of the presence of bullying within their school.

H3: There is a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's past experience with bullying and their perception of bullying within their school. A teacher's age and gender also has an effect on their perceptions.

H4: There is a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's perceptions of the fidelity in the implementation of SWPBIS and their perceptions of the effect it has towards reducing students' negative behaviors. A teacher's gender and the size of the school they teach in has an effect on their perceptions.

Definition of Terms

Bully is an individual or group of people who are perceived to be stronger and intentionally engage in repeated negative actions towards another individual whom they perceive to be weaker.

Bullying is an intentional repetitive negative behavior, engaged in by an individual or group and is directed towards a person who has difficulty defending himself or herself (Olweus, 2011).

Cyberbullying is intentionally and willfully engaging in bullying behaviors through the use of electronic devices. These electronic devices may include computers, cell phones, and electronic media sources such as the Internet (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012).

Effectiveness of SWPBIS the desired outcome of reducing negative student behaviors as a result of the implementation of the interventions used as part of a school's

SWPBIS, which includes progress made toward reaching the desired outcome (Newcomer et al., 2013; Reinke et al., 2012).

Fidelity of Implementation the intentional and consistent implementation of evidence-based instructional strategies with integrity by all staff members, through a proactive team based approach, in order to address student behavioral deficits (Reinke et al., 2012; Walker et al., 1994).

Middle School is a school that serves students in grades 6-8.

Physical Bullying is the use of any physical aggression by a bully towards another individual with the specific intent of causing harm (Aluede et al., 2008).

Presence of Bullying the occurrence of student engagement in bullying behaviors, towards their peers, within the school and/or settings, may occur through single or multiple methods, such as physical, verbal, and/or electronic methods, which may be direct or indirect engaged in by the bully (Aluede et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Low et al., 2013; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008).

Relational Aggression non-direct behaviors that are used to harm or manipulate a person's social status and relationships through a variety of means that may include social exclusion and spreading rumors. This type of behavior typically occurs among adolescent females (Low et al., 2013; Lansford et al., 2012).

School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is a school level process for creating safer schools and a positive school climate by developing school-wide expectations and using specific interventions to address and prevent negative behaviors (Scott & Martinek, 2006; Simonsen et al., 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Student Outcomes includes the reduction of negative behaviors, such as bullying and classroom disruptions, and the reduction of disciplinary actions received from the office, such as discipline referrals and out-of-school suspension, while increasing the desired positive behaviors, such as attendance and academic performance (Wright & McCurdy, 2011).

Teacher's Involvement in Implementation the active engagement of a teacher in planning and implementing student interventions and reinforcement activities that are based on the review of current student behavior and discipline data, this is used in conjunction with their current direct and indirect observations of the student (Walker et al., 1994; Wright & McCurdy, 2011).

Verbal Bullying the use of verbal exchanges between the bully and their victim, which are usually initiated by the bully with the intentional use of causing emotional harm to the victim (Aluede et al., 2008; Yerger & Gehret, 2011).

Victim is an individual who is intentionally harmed as a result of others engaging in bullying behaviors.

Delimitations

Delimitations imposed upon this study as it only included public middle schools in Mississippi that granted permission to distribute the survey. The study does not include all public and private middle schools in Mississippi; the results are only indicative of the participating schools. This study only encompasses middle schools; the results may not be generalized to elementary and high schools. With this study being limited to participating schools in Mississippi, the results may not be generalized to schools throughout the United States. Respondents have a different level of knowledge

and experience with bullying, which may affect how they respond to each of the questions. The respondents also have a different level of knowledge, experience, and role with SWPBIS, which may also affect their responses to the questions. This survey does not use any open response questions that prevent any additional factors outside of these questions from being further examined for consideration.

Assumptions

This study assumes that all respondents answered freely and honestly to the best of their ability and there were no attempts to control their responses or to require their participation in the study. It is assumed that all respondents are certified teachers or administrators with at least three years of full-time teaching experience and does not include experience as a substitute teacher. Lastly, it is assumed that all respondents have received some level of training on the SWPBIS as implemented within their school, specifically focusing on the areas that they implement within the classroom and school.

Justification

This study is justified due to the increased passage of legislation by the states legislation, throughout the United States, requiring districts to develop and implement policies regarding the presence of bullying on school grounds. In addition, several states also require schools and districts to implement bullying prevention programs in order to further educate students by working towards developing a greater level of tolerance towards individual differences (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Schools and districts are already under tremendous pressure to improve student achievement and reduce the current dropout rates, which has led many to implement programs, such as SWPBIS, which focus on building a positive environment within the

school, while also working towards addressing negative behaviors exhibited by students (Chitiyo et al., 2011; Irvin, et al., 2006; Miramontes et al., 2011; Richter et al., 2011; Simonsen et al., 2012). Many schools are already implementing SWPBIS to address the school's climate, and to improve student achievement, without the realization that this may also be working towards reducing the presence of bullying within their school as an additional benefit (Reinke et al., 2013).

Many schools throughout the United States may have some form of a SWPBIS program in place for several years, beyond their current archived records, which depends on the school and district policy for storing such records. Differing archival policies and the length of time that SWPBIS has been in place, can make it difficult to collect actual discipline data from schools to determine if there have been fewer office referrals for bullying as a result of SWPBIS.

Teachers are frequently the first line of response to incidents of student bullying within schools, whether it be through directly witnessing an incident or receiving a report from a student. In addition, they hold a crucial role in the implementation of the interventions surrounding SWPBIS and its level of success within the school. Teachers who have remained at their current school for several years will likely have a greater inside knowledge of occurrences of bullying within the school than the information contained within a school's discipline records. Not all incidents of bullying may be severe enough to warrant the need for teachers and administrators to document it in an office discipline referral, but instead require a lower level of intervention, often directly diagnosed and administered by a teacher, in order to address and eliminate the bullying behavior.

This study would further add to the literature on both SWPBIS and bullying, but also seek to help support the literature suggesting a potential link between these two research areas. Good, McIntosh, and Gietz (2011), Packman et al. (2005), along with Pugh and Chitiyo (2012); have suggested examining whether SWPBIS may be effective at reducing the presence of bullying behaviors in school. This study seeks to explore this idea to determine if the sample population supports this. The presence of this link within the sample population will support the need to explore this idea with a population that expands outside of the current research sample within Mississippi.

Summary

The heightened awareness regarding bullying among adolescents has led to the belief that this is a problem that has recently increased to greater levels than what has been experienced by previous generations. This increase is supported by the passage of legislation by most states, which require schools and districts to develop and implement policies that address its occurrence. Approximately half of the states with bullying legislation also mandate schools to implement bullying prevention programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

School climate and bullying are two dynamic issues that schools face in today's culture. A school's climate can affect how students and community view the school. However it can also affect student academic performance and the frequency and severity of disciplinary infractions that teachers and administrators handle on a daily basis. Many schools implement SWPBIS in order to foster and promote a positive school climate, but they may not realize that it may have an effect on bullying as well. Implementing SWPBIS with fidelity by rewarding the presence of positive and desired behaviors and

remediating negative behaviors using targeted interventions, can provide greater benefits throughout the school than what they may anticipate.

This study will examine the perceptions of middle school teachers and administrators regarding the effectiveness of the SWPBIS program at reducing the presence of bullying within their school. The results of this research will address the suggestions for further research as discussed in published research by Good et al. (2011) and Packman et al. (2005), through the presentation of the idea of the potential use of SWPBIS to address bullying. In addition, this study further examines the use of SWPBIS as a possible bullying prevention program as mandated by legislation passed in multiple states (U.S. Department of Education, 2011).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The heightened public awareness of the presence of bullying among adolescents and within the schools present different ideas and perspectives towards reducing and eliminating the occurrence of bullying. Each anti-bullying plan or program has its unique features and a potentially prescribed implementation method, which may not be able to be adjusted and tailored toward each particular school's needs. School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports can be utilized as a method of improving the school environment and serves as a potential system of support that can be used to help reduce the presence of bullying within the school.

This chapter will provide background information on bullying and School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports. The chapter will begin with a discussion of the literature regarding bullying, examining the different types of bullying, gender roles, and the effects that students, (victim, aggressor, or witness) may experience. A discussion on School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports will follow the discussion on bullying. This discussion will focus on the reasons for implementing SWPBIS programs within the school setting, the features of the program, and a description of its three levels of support. This review will then focus on the general strain theory and the social cognitive theory as the shared theoretical frameworks.

Bullying

Bullying has received an increased amount of attention globally as a result of the actions adolescents have turned to in order to escape the mental or physical anguish they have experienced from being bullied (Carrera et al., 2011; Yerger & Gehret, 2011).

While a considerable amount of attention has focused on the loss of life and violence that has occurred because of bullying, this represents a much smaller portion of the population (Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008). Carrera et al. (2011) reported that the

> recent media focus in various countries on some of the most serious consequences, such as youth suicide, may provide the false impression that bullying is a fairly new phenomenon, yet peer abuse has a history as long as that of traditional schooling itself. (p. 439)

Youth who experience bullying respond in many different ways in order to avoid or escape unpleasant situations, similar to the way some individuals respond to traumatic and stressful situations (Carney, 2008). However, the response that an individual engages in varies with each person, and the situation and in some instances may lead to violent and devastating results that create further media attention (Carney, 2008). Yerger and Gehret (2011) pointed out "the problem of bullying is now so serious that the American Medical Association has designated school bullying a public health concern" (p. 318). This health concern stems from the physical, emotional, and mental health effects that both the both victim and aggressor may experience (Yerger & Gehret, 2011).

Types and Definitions

Bullying is defined as an individual or group who intentionally engages in repeated negative actions towards an individual who is unable or afraid to defend him or herself (Carrera et al., 2011; Mehta et al., 2013; Olweus, 2011; Sherer & Nickerson, 2010). Yerger and Gehret (2011) discussed the idea that the victims are selected due to characteristics exhibited in which they may "appear to be physically abnormal and those who exhibit poor social skills are most at risk of being bullied" (p. 316). The actual

bullying behaviors exhibited can vary and appear differently between each situation, yet they share the common characteristic in which the behaviors exhibited violate the rights of the targeted individual (Olweus, 2011). This section will further define and describe physical, verbal, relational aggression, and cyberbullying, along with their prevalence within the school environment.

Physical bullying. Sometimes when people think of bullying, they may think of the exchange of physical aggression between the bully and their targeted victim. While this is one form of bullying and most commonly occurs between male students, it does not occur exclusively within this gender group (Bradshaw & Waasdorp, 2009; Frisén et al., 2007; Terranova et al., 2011). Physical bullying can encompass any physical aggression that is intended to harm an individual. This may include hitting and kicking a person, and usually occurs when the bully is perceived to be physically stronger than their victim (Aluede et al., 2008; Frisén et al., 2007). However, physical bullying does not necessarily involve direct physical aggression to the victim; it may include more indirect forms of aggression, such as destruction or theft of the victim's personal property (Aluede et al., 2008; Frisén et al., 2007; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). While it is most common for physical bullying to occur directly between the bully and their victim, it may also occur in an indirect manner. This indirect manner could involve the bully enlisting a friend to act in their place or in addition to the bully engaging in this act (Yerger & Gehret, 2011).

Verbal bullying. Another common form of bullying is verbal bullying. This form is done through verbal interactions initiated by the bully or verbal exchanges between the bully and the victim (Aluede et al., 2008; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). This type of bullying

is carried out through the intentional use of negative words to cause emotional harm to the victim including: threats, taunting, teasing, name-calling, and spreading rumors (Aluede et al., 2008; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). The use of verbal bullying may frequently "occur in subtle ways, making it more challenging for adults to understand" (Packman et al., 2005, p. 550). There are many cases in which the bully "may be savvy enough to behave when the teacher is looking, only to harass and bully others when unsupervised" (Packman et al., 2005, p. 550).

Relational aggression. Relational aggression typically occurs among females and can become confused with verbal bullying (Aluede et al., 2008; Low et al., 2013; Packman et al., 2005). This type of bullying is described by Packman et al. (2005) as being "generally more verbally and socially abusive" (p. 550), and is frequently less obvious than other forms of bullying, while carrying the intent of damaging the victim's social relationships (Aluede et al., 2008; Coyne, Linder, Nelson & Gentile, 2012; Gentile et al., 2011; Packman et al., 2005). According to Low et al. (2013), "relational aggression manifests itself through behaviors that intend to harm or manipulate someone's social relationships or social status through confrontational and non-confrontational means" (p. 1078). The bully uses social manipulation to strengthen their personal social status, without appearing to be the individual that is directly harming their victim (Aluede et al., 2008; Low et al., 2013; Packman et al., 2005). This social manipulation can also create feelings of loneliness, depression, social isolation, and social anxiety in both the bully and their victim (Coyne et al., 2012; Gentile et al., 2011).

Similar to the way an adolescent's environment can serve as a reinforcer for the engagement of physical and verbal aggression, media exposure can increase the

likelihood of their engagement in relational aggression (Coyne et al., 2012; Gentile et al., 2011). Coyne et al. (2012) determined that exposure to relational aggressive type behaviors on television is "likely to be portrayed as justified, rewarded, and used by attractive characters. Additionally, a growing body of research indicates that viewing relational aggression is associated with higher levels of relational aggression among viewers" (p. 142). Coyne et al. (2012) and Gentile et al. (2011) also noted that the greatest increase in relationally aggressive behaviors from media exposure is seen in girls, this is more likely to be associated with long-term effects. This increase is further reinforced in girls when they are exposed to media violence and aggression during their preschool years (Gentile et al., 2011).

Unlike physical bullying, relational aggression tends to be less spontaneous and often requires more thought and planning leading up to the engagement of the actions (Lansford et al., 2012). Victims of relational aggression are usually individuals with small social groups, whereas the bully usually has a large social group (Low et al., 2013). This creates room for social attacks to create additional harm and potentially further damaging the victim's already small social group, therefore creating further social strength for the bully (Low et al., 2013). Low et al. (2013) further state that "relational aggression is facilitated by social networks and intensifies during early adolescence" (p. 1085). The damage created as a result of relational aggression can last well into adulthood and affect further social and professional networking (Lansford et al., 2013; Low et al., 2013; Packman et al., 2005).

Cyberbullying. Cyberbullying is a newer form of bullying that is on the rise in both popularity and prevalence, which is a result of our technology-dependent society

(Juvonen & Gross, 2008). Patchin and Hinduja (2012) defined cyberbullying as "willful and repeated harm inflicted through the use of computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices" (p. 7). This type of bullying can be the most difficult for adults to identify, because it typically occurs indirectly without both individuals present in one particular location (Aluede et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Schneider et al., 2012; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). Schneider et al. (2012) suggest that cyber bullying "perpetrators may feel reduced responsibility and accountability when online compared to face-to-face situations" (p. 171). Bullies elect to use electronic means because they provide the bully with a false sense of anonymity, which reinforces the belief that they cannot be caught (Aluede et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). This sense may be further enhanced with the use of prepaid or pay-as-you-go cell phones, because owners are not required to present any form of identity to purchase and owner records are not kept or maintained (Aluede et al., 2008).

Prevalence of bullying within the school environment. Bullying can occur at any given time or location; however, some of the greatest concerns among parents and community members have been related to the occurrence of these behaviors within the school environment (Good et al., 2011; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008; Rigby & Smith, 2011; Sawyer, Mishna, Pepler, & Wiener, 2011). Mehta et al. (2013) discussed that "considerable research has documented the negative impact of bullying on the mental health and academic performance of individual victims, but less attention has been given to the schoolwide impact of bullying on school climate and the wider student body" (pp. 45-46). A high presence of bullying behaviors that occur within the school setting can create an overall negative perception of the school by community members (Good et al.,

2011; Mehta et al., 2013). Meyer-Adams and Conner (2008) pointed out, "there is evidence that bullying has more negative effects, including increased rates of truancy and dropping out of school, worsening grades or academic achievement, and difficult psychosocial and psychosexual relationships" (p. 212).

The heightened awareness of bullying in today's global society indicates a sense of an increased occurrence of bullying within the schools, creating a greater sense of urgency to school and community leaders (Good et al., 2011; Mehta et al., 2013; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008; Rigby & Smith, 2011; Sawyer et al., 2011). However, Rigby and Smith (2011) examined studies conducted between 1990 and 2009, the results indicate there has been a decrease in the overall presence of school-based bullying globally. This decrease is opposite of the belief held by much of today's society. "Only 3 countries out of 27 reported an overall increase in occasional victimization and only 1 country in chronic victimization. By contrast, 19 countries reported a decrease in occasional victimization and 21 in chronic victimization." (Rigby & Smith, 2011, p. 449). This data further strengthens the idea that the heightened awareness of bullying may be providing the false sense that bullying has become a greater problem today than it has been in the past. However, the prevalence of bullying is one important aspect to examine to develop a better understanding of the occurrence of bullying, the effects that are a result of gender differences also have an effect on the prevalence.

Gender Roles Within Bullying

While society may hold certain beliefs as to what bullying may look like, research has shown that gender has some effect on the role that an individual may play within bullying. These roles include those engaged in by both boys and girls as the bully, the

victim, or a witness of bullying (Carlyle & Steinmen, 2007). This section examines the gender roles of the bullies and victims and the role that gender plays on reporting and peer support.

Bullying behaviors exhibited. Research has demonstrated that bullying was more prevalent among male students (Carlyle & Steinman, 2007). However, more recent studies have shown that there are very little gender differences in the actual presence of bullying, but instead shows a difference in the actual behaviors exhibited (Carlyle & Steinman, 2007). Frisén et al. (2007) discussed that

> several researchers have found that boys are more often involved in bullying than girls, both as bullies and victims. However, although boys engage in more physical aggression and bullying, the sex difference is less pronounced for verbal bullying and is sometimes the reverse for indirect bullying. (pp. 749-750)

Male students typically engage in physical and direct forms of bullying and aggression, these behaviors are easier for adults and bystanders to locate, and may lead to a false sense that bullying is more prevalent among males (Aluede et al., 2008; Carrera et al., 2011; Coyne et al., 2012; Gentile, 2011; Lansford et al., 2012; Packman et al., 2005). As Carrera et al. (2011) point out, "research has found boys to be more likely to participate in bullying behavior as perpetrators as well as victims" (p. 483). However, this does not dismiss the idea that there is a strong presence of physical bullying among female students (Lansford et al., 2012). In addition, Carrera et al. (2011) identified that boys are more likely to participate in bullying in both the roles of the bully and the victim.

While female students are less likely to engage in physical and direct bullying, they are more likely engage in indirect forms of manipulation, such as relational aggression and cyberbullying (Aluede et al., 2008; Carrera et al., 2011; Coyne et al., 2011; Gentile et al., 2012; Lansford et al., 2012). Aluede et al. (2008) found "although it is a more indirect form of bullying, social manipulation is very prevalent within females" (p. 153). Female students use specific patterns of social manipulation to damage an individual's reputation and friendships through the use of Grossip and group exclusion (Aluede et al., 2008; Carrera et al., 2011; Coyne et al., 2011; Gentile, 2012; Lansford et al., 2012; Rigby & Smith, 2011). International studies examined by Rigby and Smith (2011) show that the higher prevalence of relational aggression among female students varies among countries.

Victimization. Victims may exhibit many different reactions to the bullying that they have endured. Yerger and Gehret (2011) discussed the idea that "victims develop a pattern of assumed inadequacy, as they feel little success in dealing with the bully and do not have any ideas for resolution of the bullying" (p. 318). These individuals feel less confident and more anxious in social situations, especially when they are in the presence of the bully or an environment in which they have experienced bullying (Packman et al., 2005).

Male students are less likely to suffer emotional and psychological harm related to bullying than female students (Aluede et al., 2008). The differences in the way they process and handle being victimized leave males more likely to become the bullies themselves, or in some cases the bully later becomes the victim (Gorman-Smith, 2012; Solberg et al., 2007). Studies show that boys are as much as twice as likely to become

bully-victims as female students, whereas age or ethnicity did not have an effect on this prevalence (Carlyle, 2007; Solberg et al., 2007).

Female students react to bullying differently, which may be related to the prevalence of relational aggression among female students, rather than physical aggression (Aluede et al., 2008; Carrera, 2011; Mehta et al., 2013). Often female students experience an increased level of emotional distress as a result of the bullying. "Twenty-six percent of girls who were frequently bullied reported depression as opposed to 8% of girls who were not. Similarly boys who were bullied and reported depression were 16% as against 3% who were not" (Aluede et al., 2008, p. 156). In addition, Aluede et al. (2008) reported that female victims are twice as likely to be suicidal than male students. The psychological damage that females are more likely to experience may be a direct result of the damaged social reputations and relationships from being bullied (Aluede et al., 2008; Lansford et al., 2012; Juvonen & Gross, 2008).

Reporting and peer support. Students often fail to report cases of bullying, whether they are the victims or the witness of bullying among their peers (Frisén et al., 2007; Meyer-Adams & Connor, 2008; Packman et al., 2005; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). A study conducted by Frisén et al. (2007) indicated that adolescents may have little faith in adult interventions towards reducing or eliminating bullying. When asked "whether teachers would intervene if they detected bullying, only half reported that they would do so" (Frisén et al., 2007, p. 760). Yerger and Gehret (2011) expressed that it is important to realize that students are also a product of their environment, "though parents do serve as guardians and role models, they are not the only social contributors to bullying behavior" (p. 318). Adult role models also contribute to the likelihood in which students

will report that they have been bullied or have witnessed bullying among their peers (Meyer-Adams & Connor, 2008; Yerger & Gehret, 2011).

Studies show that students from both genders are unlikely to report the occurrence of bullying (Aluede et al., 2008; Carlyle & Steinman, 2007; Packman et al., 2005). However, Packman et al. (2005) noted a shift in the reporting of bullying when schools implemented student-led anti-bullying activities. Packman also discovered the use of "peer-led anti-bullying efforts reduced the self and peer reported incidents of bullying among female students, although less impact was seen with male students" (p. 551). This decline in reporting among female students may be a direct result of the implementation of the program and its effectiveness at bringing further awareness of bullying type behaviors among female students (Aluede et al., 2008; Good et al., 2011; Packman et al., 2005). The emphasis that students place on their peer and social relationships and the fear of potentially damaging these relationships may also contribute to this decline (Aluede et al., 2008; Good et al., 2011; Packman et al., 2005).

The occurrence of bullying begins to decline under conditions in which the victim begins to fall within what is considered to be normal and accepted by their peers (Aluede et al., 2008). Frisén et al. (2007) stated that

> several victims reported that the bullying stopped when they no longer deviated so greatly from their peers, for example by losing weight or when a case of acne cleared up. The same pattern was found in a follow-up study of boys who had been victimized by their peers in school; the former victims had "normalized" in many ways as young adults by the age of 23. (pp. 759-760)

The increased perception of the victim falling within what their peer group views as being normal and takes away from the reasons why they were targeted (Aluede et al., 2008; Frisén et al., 2007). Just as gender differences can affect the reasons why an individual is bullied and the types of behaviors being engaged in, can also affect whether or not their peers will come to the aid of a victim. Female students are more likely to come to the aid of a victim and actively intervene in the situation to help bring an end to the bullying (Austen et al., 2012; Frisén et al., 2007; Terranova et al., 2011; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). Their reasoning for doing so is often directly tied to a personal relationship that they may have with the victim, which may make it more likely that they will not intervene (Austin et al., 2012; Terranova et al., 2011). Austin et al. (2012) discussed the idea that "some defenders want the attention they will receive by becoming involved" (p. 286). This desire for attention is based on the level of support and encouragement that is received from their peers (Terranova et al., 2011). Terranova et al. (2011) stated that "older youth and males were expected to be less likely to seek support from others, avoid situations where victimization was likely to occur, and engage in internalizing response when the targets of bullying" (p. 422). However, age does play a factor in this, as research has shown that younger children do not have adequate social experiences to respond and seek support from their peers (Carlyle & Steinmen, 2007; Frisén et al., 2007; Terranova, 2011; Yerger & Gehret, 2011).

Summary of gender research. Studies show that there are some gender differences in the specific bullying behaviors being exhibited, but there are also varying degrees of differences in the way that male and female students react to bullying (Aluede et al., 2008; Austin et al., 2012; Carlyle & Steinman; 2007; Carney, 2008; Frisén et al., 2007;

Lansford et al., 2012; Packman et al., 2005; Solberg et al., 2007). Female students are more likely to engage in relational aggression than physical bullying, however, the trend for relational aggression has begun to reverse, but this also tends to vary with age (Lansford et al., 2012; Low et al., 2013). Low et al. (2013) reported that

> during the 1990's, much research supported the notion that girls are socialized to exercise more relational forms of aggression (as opposed to verbal, physical), by demonstrating that girls disproportionately engage in relational aggression, while boys engage in multiple forms of aggression. Despite this, several studies have failed to document significant sex differences in relational aggression. (Low et al., 2013, p. 1080)

Globally there is a "lack of gender differences in relational aggression" (Lansford et al., 2012, p. 306), yet research conducted by Lansford et al. (2012) show a difference in the occurrence of relational aggression between genders in elementary age children.

Similar patterns of inconsistencies within gender-related prevalence are also present in the area of cyberbullying. As Schneider et al. (2012) noted, "some studies have found that girls are more likely to be victims of cyberbullying, yet other studies have found no gender differences" (p. 171). Despite the absence of significant differences between genders, females are more likely to engage in cyberbullying (Low et al., 2013; Schneider et al., 2012). This significance may be contributed to a false assumption that their online actions cannot be tied to them, which makes social networking an attractive avenue for females, compared their male counterparts (Low et al., 2013; Schneider et al., 2012). As Juvonen and Gross (2008) pointed out, "contrary to common assumptions about the anonymity of cyberbullies, 73% of the respondents were

'pretty sure' or 'totally sure' of the identity of the perpetrator" (p. 502). This high percentage of victims who believe they are aware of their cyberbully's identity, further reinforces the idea that the bully is provided with a false sense of security using electronic communication to engage in these behaviors (Aluede et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Yerger & Gehret, 2011).

Effects of Bullying

Victims of bullying can experience an overwhelming number of effects that are related to the aggression that they have experienced. Just as each case is unique, so is the damage caused to each victim, making it impossible to predict how one particular person may react (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Mehta et al., 2013; Sawyer et al., 2011; Schneider et al., 2012). Individuals who are victims of bullying may experience physical, emotional, or social effects as a result of bullying, however these may not occur in isolation and may occur together individually or as a the result of another (Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Mehta et al., 2013; Sawyer et al., 2011). This section will discuss each of these effects that victims may experience as a result of being bullied.

Physical. The physical effects that victims of bullying experience may be more than bruises or wounds that result from physical aggression and fighting (Aluede et al., 2008). Physical effects can occur throughout the body, and can include stomach aches and headaches, which can be related to an increased amount of stress that is being placed on the individual (Carrera et al., 2011; Mehta et al., 2013; Sawyer et al., 2011). Aluede et al. (2008) further described many of the physical symptoms that victims may experience as a result of being bullied.

> Some of the physical symptoms [of bullying] include headaches and migraines, skin problems such as eczema, psoriasis, athletes foot ulcers, sweating, trembling, shaking, palpitations and panic attacks, irritable bowel syndrome, aches and pains in the joints and muscles; and frequent illness such as viral infections. (Aluede et al., 2008, p. 157)

In some cases, the physical effects of bullying can be directly related to the social and emotional pain that the victim experience. These can be heightened to a point in which it causes the individual to become physically sick (Frisén et al., 2007; Mehta et al., 2013; Terranova et al., 2011). Many of the physical effects that a victim associates with being bullied will improve when the bullying decreases (Aluede et al., 2008; Frisén et al., 2007; Terranove et al., 2011). Unfortunately, it can be difficult to determine whether the physical effects are related to being the victim or aggressor when many instances of bullying go unreported (Carrera et al., 2001; Meyer-Adams & Connor, 2008; Sawyer et al., 2011; Solberg et al., 2007). This lack of reporting leaves many parents and teachers unaware of what is actually happening with some students (Carrera et al., 2001; Sawyer et al., 2011; Solberg et al., 2007). These physical side effects may lead to an increased number of absences and may lead to students skip school to avoid further associations with the environment and individuals causing them to feel sick (Meyer-Adams & Connor, 2008).

Emotional. The emotional effects that victims of bullying experience are frequently overlooked due to the hidden nature of the signs and symptoms (Carrera et al., 2011). Emotional effects begin to gain attention when students engage in extreme behaviors in order to escape the emotional pain of bullying attacks (Carrera et al., 2011;

Yerger & Gehret, 2011). Just as the physical effects of bullying affect each person differently, so can the emotional effects of bullying. However, unlike physical effects, the emotional effects can have an impact on the victim that may stay with them for the rest of their lives (Austin et al., 2012; Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Terranova et al., 2011; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). As discussed by Austin et al. (2012), victims experience many different emotional effects including the potential for "heightened anxiety and are high risk for self-harm and suicidal ideation" (p. 287). Students who are bullied may experience depression, suicidal tendencies, difficulties concentrating in school, and poor or decreased academic performance (Aluede et al., 2008; Carney et al., 2008; Schneider et al., 2012). This can lead to the development of a feeling of either carelessness or reduced self-confidence, which can instill a greater sense of hopelessness and failure for the victim (Aluede et al., 2008; Carney et al., 2008; Schneider et al., 2012). Victims often have low self-esteem as a result of the bullying that they have experienced; however, Frisén et al. (2007) discussed "bully-victims to be those with the lowest self-esteem" (p. 751). Bully-victims can be individuals who have been the bully first and later become the victims. They may also have first been the victim and reached a low level of emotional state of health that they have turned to this behavior in order to feel better about themselves (Frisén et al., 2007; Solberg et al., 2007).

Bullying can impact an individual emotionally to the point that they may experience such extreme harmful levels of mental health that it affects their entire emotional well-being. Juvonen and Gross (2008) discussed "even a single incident of bullying encountered at school is associated with elevated daily levels of anxiety.

Similarly, a single episode of cyberbullying has been shown to be related to emotional distress" (p. 497). Students with disabilities, particularly with social and emotional disabilities, experience additional adverse effects than their non-disabled peers (Gorman-Smith, 2012; Terranova et al., 2011). In some cases, the adverse effects may create other problems, which may be related to their disability, or cause them to shut down and become depressed (Gorman-Smith, 2012; Sawyer et al., 2011; Terranova et al., 2011). The emotional effects that are experienced by bullying victims and witnesses include "intrusive thoughts and feelings [which] might exhibit nightmares, waves of strong emotions, and anxiety as sudden vivid images of the experiences pop into their minds" (Carney et al., 2008, p. 180). Further exposure to bullying can create additional problems for the victim, which may include the development of negative associations with conditions that may connect to the bullying, but do not have a direct effect (Carney, 2008). Yerger and Gehret (2011) suggested "victims develop a pattern of assumed inadequacy, as they feel little success in dealing with the bully and do not have any ideas for resolution of the bullying. This lack of external support makes them more vulnerable in the future" (p. 318).

Social. Some bullies select their victims because the targeted individual appears to be socially awkward compared to their peers (Aluede et al., 2008; Carrera et al., 2011; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). Carney et al. (2011) reported that the "lack of acceptance by peer groups has been associated with peer victimization, low levels of participation in school activities, school disengagement and low achievement, and children's adjustment difficulties" (p. 482). This affects their views of potential social relationships by creating fear of such interactions or developing problems with attachment and trust (Austin et al.,

2012; Carrera et al., 2011; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). Victims of relational aggression may have a smaller level of social impact as a result of the social manipulation that is occurring around them (Low et al., 2013; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). Low et al. (2013) discussed that relational aggression "involves bids to manipulate or damage group members (e.g., spreading rumors through other groups, or excluding someone from one's own clique). Thus social aggression by its very nature originates in, and is reinforced through social networks" (p. 1078). The damage to a victim's social network can further reinforce their social withdrawal and feeling of social awkwardness, which may weaken any current or future peer relationships (Lansford et al., 2012; Low et al., 2013).

The social effects of bullying are not just restricted to the victims, but may also be experienced by the bullies as well (Aluede et al., 2008; Austin et al., 2012; Frisén et al., 2007). Yerger and Gehret (2011) discussed "a child's social network inevitably influences him or her for better or worse" (p. 318). Bullies may have difficulty making friends, which may lead their becoming anti-social as they reach adulthood (Alude et al., 2008; Yerger & Gehret, 2011) "bullying is sometimes the first stepping stone to juvenile crime and criminal activities" (Aluede et al., 2008, p. 157). Bullies may engage in bullying-type activities as a result of problems within their home environment (Austin et al., 2012; Carrera et al., 2011; Solberg et al., 2007). They may also use this as an avenue for getting something they desire, such as money, attention, or social status (Austin et al., 2012; Carrera et al., 2011; Solberg et al., 2007). Good et al. (2011) discussed how "children who are labeled as bullies may draw self-confidence and self-identification from that label, which may, in turn, cause them to use such behavior more often" (p. 50). While their behavior may produce the desired short-term effects for the bully, it can lead

to the development of the idea that they are able to get what they want out of life by treating others negatively and without regard to their feelings (Austin et al., 2012; Good et al., 2011; Yerger & Gehret, 2011).

Summary of effects. Bullying has many effects that the victim and the bully may both experience, despite the absence of the visible external signs, which prevent bystanders and adults from being aware that there may be a problem (Aluede et al., 2008; Austin et al., 2012; Carrera et al., 2001; Hinduja & Patchin, 2011; Meyer-Adams & Conner, 2008; Patchin & Hinduja, 2012; Sawyer et al., 2011; Solberg et al., 2007; Terranova et al., 2011; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). Mehta et al. (2011) discussed how the presence of bullying within the school can create the feeling for an overall negative school environment, this in turn is "associated with lower schoolwide student engagement even after controlling for individual perceptions of bullying climate" (p. 50). This can lead to lower levels of school engagement and produce negative effects on students' academic performance, in addition to the physical, emotional, and social effects that they may be experiencing (Aluede et al., 2008; Mehta et al., 2011; Sawyer et al., 2011). The effects of bullying can have a lasting impact on the victim, however, they are not the only ones who are impacted, as the bully may experience both similar and very different effects as well (Aluede et al., 2008; Austin et al., 2012; Carrera et al., 2011; Frisén et al., 2007; Good et al., 2011; Solberg et al., 2007; Yerger & Gehret, 2011.

Bullying Laws

The increased awareness surrounding bullying brought out the need for further action to be taken in order to further address the problems that have developed. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2011),

> the Columbine High School shooting in Littleton, Colo., was the first nationally visible incident of student-perpetrated school violence that was presumed to be tied to a history of bullying victimization. In the aftermath of the school shooting and in reaction to local bullying-related suicide in the state, Georgia became the first state to pass bullying legislation. (p. 15)

Other states have followed the precedence that Georgia set in 1999, through the introduction of legislation, which has been passed by state legislatures throughout the country (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). The specific language and details developed varies with each state's definition of bullying, addressing reported incidents, and prevention education, however there are some common areas shared between the laws.

According to an analysis of bullying laws published by Hinduja and Patchin (2014), 49 states have passed bullying laws since 1999. As of April 2014, Montana is the only state that has not enacted or proposed any laws that specifically address bullying, however, the idea has been introduced during each legislative session between 2005 and 2013, but the battle between lawmakers and organizations continue to cause the potential law to fail (Bullypolice.org, 2014). The passage of these laws, show that lawmakers have taken an interest in the public's increased awareness of the issue (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). This is further supported with the continued legislation that has been passed in order to further refine and shape these laws. Currently, federal legislation regarding bullying has not been enacted, however, the Megan Meier Cyberbullying

Prevention Act (HR 1966) was introduced in 2009, but Congress did not take any further towards passing this bill (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014).

Each state's laws contains several key components including the definition of bullying, prohibited behaviors, requirement of school district policies, the development of consequences by the school district, and the method of communication regarding the policy provisions (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Out of the states with bullying laws, only 20 states have laws that specifically address cyberbullying, while 48 have laws that also prohibit electronic forms of harassment (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014). Despite the differences between each state's laws and what it specifically encompasses, each contains a common theme that emphasizes "the civil rights of students to be free from bullying and harassment, the need for safety and security of the school environment, the importance of positive school climate to support learning and achievement, or the detrimental effects of school bullying" (U.S. Department of Education, 2011, p. 22). This further reinforces the idea that the safety and well-being of the students is an important aspect of a school's culture and in reducing the presence of bullying.

The laws further emphasize the role that the school holds towards reducing the presence of bullying by requiring school districts to adopt bullying policies (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Each of the 49 states that have passed bullying laws also require districts to adopt bullying policies; in addition, 13 of these states have a provision within the law that also requires schools to address bullying behaviors that occur off campus (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014). "Statutes typically require districts to create and adopt school policies according to established deadlines, and some set expectations for states to review policies to ensure compliance" (U.S. Department of

Education, 2011, p. 29). Requiring districts to implement bullying policies provides a specific set of guidelines and steps that administrators must follow to investigate reports of bullying. These guidelines also provide a prescribed policy to determine what further action needs to be taken to remain in compliance with the law while ensuring that all reports are treated in a fair and equal manner (Hinduja & Patchin, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2011). As of 2011, 20 states require districts to implement bullying prevention programs for students, while an additional 11 states recommend that schools implement bullying prevention programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports is an example of a potential bullying program that is being used in schools throughout the United States.

School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports

As school administrators try to address the presence of existing problems with negative student behaviors through discipline, they examine it from the perspective that selecting a specific prevention program or method will be an effective solution for helping all students (Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Wright & McCurdy, 2011). According to Pas and Bradshaw (2012), "research suggests that, on average, schools are implementing a dozen or more different prevention programs" (p. 418), in addition to addressing existing problems with student discipline, while working to improve the overall school climate. While many programs have been successful, many schools have turned towards implementing School-Wide Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (SW-PBIS or SWPBIS), which may also be referred to as School-Wide Positive Behavior Support (SW-PBS or SWPBS), in order to improve the overall school and classroom environment (Reinke et al., 2013). Reinke et al. (2013) report that "Nearly

14,000 schools across the United States currently implement School-Wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports" (p. 39), which is an increase from a 2010 report of approximately 13,000 schools (Simonsen et al., 2012).

Features of SWPBIS

Simonsen et al. (2012) define SWPBIS to be "a systems-level, positive, and preventative approach that results in desired change in student and staff behavior" (p. 5). SWPBIS is not a program or curriculum that uses specific interventions and strategies for addressing and preventing negative behaviors (Newcomer et al., 2013; Scott et al., 2010; Scott & Martinek, 2006). Rather, it is a conceptual framework used by stakeholders to identify and promote positive behaviors (Newcomer et al., 2013; Scott et al., 2010; Scott & Martinek, 2006). As Scott and Martinek (2006) discussed, SWPIBS is unlike other available programs because it does not follow a "one-size-fits-all, cookbook approach" (p. 165). Schools are required to assess their needs and resources in order to determine which interventions are utilized and the best approach for implementation. As Richter et al. (2011) discussed,

> essential components of SWPBS include (a) administrative support, participation, and leadership; (b) common purpose and approach to discipline; (c) clear expectations; (d) procedures for teaching expectations; (e) a continuum of procedures for encouraging appropriate behavior; (f) a continuum of procedures for discouraging inappropriate behavior; and (g) procedures for ongoing monitoring. These components are integrated throughout a three-tiered framework. (p. 69)

The three-tier approach utilized as part of SWPBIS is similar to that of the Response to Intervention (RTI) process and uses a data-based approach to determine needed interventions to help students become more successful both behaviorally and academically (Chitiyo et al., 2011; Irvin et al., 2006; Miramontes et al., 2011; Richter et al., 2011; Simonsen et al., 2012).

Miramontes et al. (2011) further described this as being a system of interventions which "are data driven in that they rely heavily on data to guide decision making and are based on the sustained use of research-validated practices focused on maximizing student achievement" (p. 447). However, the team cannot act independently and requires the support of the school administration along with the majority of the teachers and staff members. Each of these groups play crucial roles in the implementation and overall success of SWPBIS (Miramontes et al., 2011; Richter et al., 2011).

Behavior expectations. Flannery et al. (2009) described the emphasis of SWPBIS as "the establishment of a positive and preventative continuum of behavior support in which, for example, behaviorally defined expectations are taught directly and formally acknowledged" (p. 177). Wright and McCurdy (2012) stated that SWPBIS supports the desired primary outcomes which includes the "reductions in office discipline referrals and out-of-school suspensions, improvements in the proportion of students meeting state reading standards and improvements in overall school organizational health or climate" (p. 173). In order to achieve these outcomes, the team must first define and teach the targeted expectations along with identifying methods of reinforcement in order to produce and maintain the desired behaviors (Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Wright & McCurdy, 2012). Holloman and Yates (2013)

describe the goals of a SWPBIS program as not only expecting the students to follow the desired goals and expectations, but also to expect the teachers and staff to be examples of these expectations. They continue by describing the idea in which

> building and maintaining a culture of mutual respect should be our goal. It begins with teachers who model respect. When students see us being respectful, they begin to understand what respect really looks like, sounds like, and how they can show respect for themselves and others. We all want respect from others, and when we freely give it, we can expect it in return. (Holloman & Yates, 2013, p. 125)

While defining the behavior expectations is important by itself, they must be clearly defined in a way that is measurable and include specific criteria and procedures for reinforcing the presence of the desired behavior (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012). Reinke et al. (2013) suggest that the use of clearly defined rules and procedures "supports generalization across school settings" (p. 40) while reducing the opportunity for confusion. Clearly defined rules and procedures play a significant role in determining program effectiveness and reducing the chance for disciplinary problems to arise due to confusion (Holloman & Yates, 2013; Reinke et al., 2013).

Staff support. Before implementing any new program that increases the workload of the faculty and staff, it is important to obtain their buy-in to the program, which will increase the likelihood of success (Bambara et al., 2013; Flannery et al., 2009; Miramontes et al., 2011). Miramontes et al. (2011) reinforces the importance of buy-in because the faculty and staff will "most likely [engage in] the daily effort and commitment constituted a greater burden for teachers than for other participants. When

implementing programs, teachers' perceptions, buy-in, and ability to carry out the interventions should be carefully considered" (p. 459). Flannery et al. (2009) stated in their research that "a common challenge was the struggle to obtain buy-in and support from both administrators and staff members" (p. 179). Placing a greater emphasis and concern towards the faculty and staff throughout the design and implementation phases, creates a program that becomes more self-driven, rather than needing continued direction from the program coach or leadership team (Bambara et al., 2013).

Securing faculty and staff buy-in, when implementing a new program, is a challenge that varies in difficulty within each school setting. Although a study conducted by Flannery et al. (2009) noted that this became increasingly more difficult at the high school level. Flannery et al. further noted "only 30% of respondents reported that 76% or more staff supported the SWPBS implementation. Furthermore only 26% of respondents stated that that at least 76% of staff participated in the SWPBS program" (p. 179). Supporters of SWPBIS recommend that schools obtain a faculty and staff buy-in rate of at least 80% to increase the likelihood that the program will be successful (Flannery et al., 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996). Schools who do not maintain this buy-in rate risk seeing this level of support decrease along with the decreased likelihood for the program to be successful towards achieving the desired goals (Flannery et al., 2009; Simonsen et al., 2011). When securing faculty buy-in, it is important to obtain an understanding of the perceptions of the professionals who are implementing the strategies (Bambara et al., 2012; Flannery et al., 2009; Simonsen et al., 2011). Bamabara et al. (2012) discussed the idea that "perceptions alone, including feelings of self-efficacy, can affect the extent to which professionals try new strategies and persist through problem-

solving when faced with difficulties" (p. 229). If the faculty holds a negative perception towards the expectations and interventions included as part of the SWPBIS program, there will be a lower level of success (Bambara et al., 2012; Flannery et al., 2009; Simonsen et al., 2011). These negative perceptions need to be addressed and resolved prior to the SWPBIS leadership team implementing the expectations and interventions (Flannery et al., 2009; Simonsen et al., 2011; Walker et al., 2011).

Approaches. In order for students to understand the desired behavioral expectations that they are expected to adhere to, attention must be given to both the desired behavior and the physical environment (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012). Pugh and Chitiyo (2012) suggest that schools focus on examining the "environments and behaviors within environments and redesigning those environments to reduce negative behaviors" (p. 50). This examination would be used in conjunction with direct instruction approaches, similar to the manner in which classroom instruction takes place. Utilizing this approach allows students to see a demonstration of how they are expected to behave within a particular environment, while increasing the opportunity for the necessary associations to be made (Carr et al., 2002; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996). These expectations must be presented in a way for students to understand the expectations, but they need to be applied consistently throughout the school. This consistency helps promote student success while preventing confusion (Scott et al., 2010; Reinke et al., 2013; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Scott et al. (2010) discussed the idea in which "research indicates that such basic classroom-based strategies as consistent routines, clearly communicated high expectations, frequent opportunities to respond, active engagement, use of prompts, and consistent consequences are highly

associated with student success" (p. 521). Maintaining consistent routines and high expectations helps provide additional support for determining if the absence of the desired behavior is a result of a student's skill deficits (Carr et al., 2002; Newcomer et al., 2013; Scott et al., 2010; Walker et al., 1996).

Providing examples and direct instruction of the desired behaviors is key to developing students' understanding of the expectations. Furthermore, the use of regular positive feedback and reinforcement helps reinforce the occurrence of the desired behaviors (Reinke et al., 2013; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Wright & McCurdy, 2011). Scott et al. (2010) discussed that maintaining "positive interactions with significant adult figures in the school environment are likely to foster competent acclimation to the school, whereas stressful teacher-child interactions may create obstacles to successful adjustment" (p. 520). However, violations of the rules can be expected as part of the learning process. When this does occur, Reinke et al. (2013) noted the importance of having "planned, consistent, and explicit responses that direct student attention to the specific rule they violated" (p. 41). These corrections must be positive and provide the opportunity for the student to understand the particular behavior that was inappropriate (Carr et al., 2002; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012; Reinke et al., 2013; Sugai & Horner, 2002). The corrections need to be presented in a way that allows them to learn the desired behavior that they are expected to demonstrate (Carr et al., 2002; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012; Reinke et al., 2013; Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Data-based decision making. Just as the academic RTI process is driven by student performance data, the same principle holds for decision making using SWPBIS. Data is used by the leadership team to determine which interventions should be

implemented and where students need to be placed on the tier system (Miramontes et al., 2011). Newton, Algozinne, Algozinne, Horner, and Todd (2011) stated that "effective school personnel use data to enhance decision making about monitoring and improving instruction, documenting progress and outcomes, and informing parents and other stakeholders about key performance indicators" (p. 229). In the SWPBIS program, data is collected through office discipline referrals (ODR) and examined to determine the presence of any patterns of behaviors that exist between individual students or settings (Irvin et al., 2006; Newton et al., 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Irvin et al. (2006) discussed the idea that "ODR measures appear to be a valuable data source both for identifying school-wide patterns of problem behaviors and for monitoring individual student interventions" (p. 10). However, data review is not restricted to reports of negative student behavior, but through checklists and reports maintained by classroom teachers as a method of monitoring successes to help determine student improvement (Irvin et al., 2006; Newton et al., 2011; Scott et al., 2010; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013; Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Using data to drive the decision making process allows for the SWPBIS team to test their hypotheses, determine the specific types of interventions that are needed, and determine the success of the selected interventions (Irvin et al., 2006; Miramontes et al., 2011; Newton et al., 2011; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). Irvin et al. (2006) focused on the benefits of the data collection process, stating that the collected data needs to be reviewed on a monthly basis in order to:

> (a) assist in internal decision making about improving school discipline practices; (b) assist in supporting planning with individual students; (c)

> report discipline data to the district, state, and/or federal levels; and (d) aggregate and interpret ODR data across schools within and/or across districts and states. (p. 12)

The reliability of the data being presented to the team for review is based upon the consistency and mutual understanding of importance for the designated staff members who are responsible for handling and inputting discipline data (Irvin et al., 2006; Scott & Martinek, 2006). According to Scott and Martinek (2006), if data entry is viewed as a "meaningless chore rather than an important component of the evaluation of schoolwide systems" (p. 171), then there is a decreased level of reliability within the data and the decisions that team can derive from it.

Fidelity. The fidelity of implementation of a SWPBIS program is described as the extent in which the components of the interventions are applied as intended in order to achieve the desired student outcomes (Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Scott et al., 2010; Simonsen et al., 2012). Implementation of the SWPBIS program can be evaluated through different measures of assessment. This can be done by examining the way the team uses the collected information, and also used to determine whether the program is being implemented with fidelity (Pas & Brasdshaw, 2012). The SWPBIS leadership team is charged with collaborating and determining which interventions and approaches should be utilized at each level. The effectiveness of the interventions is only as the faculty's level of commitment towards the implementation of interventions and enforcing school rules and expectations, while also maintaining administration support (Flannery et al., 2009; Newcomer et al., 2013; Walker et al., 1996). Sugai and Horner (2002) suggest, "schools should not attempt to implement any action plan without high

confidence that all staff are fluent with the skills and strategies of the plan" (p. 42). Some of the factors that need to be considered when developing the SWPBIS interventions include: time constraints, class sizes, access to resources, collaboration both between and within school and community members, and administration support (Bambara et al., 2012; Flannery et al., 2009; Scott et al., 2010; Walker et al., 1996). The absence or lack of these factors may negatively affect the fidelity of implementation, which can also hinder the success of the SWPBIS program (Bambara et al., 2012; Flannery et al., 2009; Scott et al., 2010; Walker et al., 1996).

Obtaining and maintaining fidelity of SWPBIS is based upon communication, acceptance, and consistency of implementation across all faculty and staff members who are involved, even if their role may appear to be insignificant (Scott et al., 2010). Miramontes et al. (2011) point out that prior to "implementing programs, teachers' perceptions, buy-in, and ability to carry out the interventions should be carefully considered" (p. 459). Schools that have a higher level of faculty and staff members who buy-in to SWPBIS are likely to have a high level of implementation fidelity (Newcomer et al., 2013; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Walker et al., 1996). This result is due to the willingness and acceptance of the rules, expectations, and interventions by all faculty and staff members (Newcomer et al., 2013; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Walker et al., 1996). Faculty and staff buy-in is an important part of the implementation and maintenance phase, but this must include data analysis as the avenue for driving the decision making process (Irvin et al., 2006; Sugai & Horner, 2002). As previously discussed, the data analysis can most efficiently be completed through the use of an ODR because of the accurate information it contains regarding the negative behavior (Irvin et al., 2006;

Miramontes et al., 2011; Newcomer et al., 2013; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996).

Continuum of Support

The SWPBIS process is designed to be a school-wide program of interventions. There are cases in which some students will need additional levels of support to develop a better understanding of the behavioral expectations and how to apply these throughout the school and community settings (Newton et al., 2011). Sugai and Horner (2002) discussed how "schools have moved beyond simply excluding children with program behavior to a policy of active development of social behaviors" (p. 27). Similar to the way schools support students with varied learning needs, the SWPBIS process works in this manner to help students with varying social, emotional, and behavioral needs (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Scott et al., 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Identifying students who struggle socially, emotionally, and behaviorally can begin by examining ODR data (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Scott et al., 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2002). The SWPBIS leadership team uses ODR data to determine the placement criteria for placing students into one of three tiers of interventions, similar to that of the RTI process: Tier 1, school-wide; Tier 2, setting specific; and Tier 3, individualized (Fallon et al., 2012; Miramontes et al., 2011; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Scott et al., 2010; Simonsen et al., 2012; Walker et al., 1996).

Tier 1, school-wide interventions. Just like the RTI process, all students begin at Tier 1 within the SWPBIS process (Miramontes et al., 2011). At this level, emphasis is placed on implementing strategies that are geared towards teaching and reinforcing the rules and expectations through the use of primary prevention strategies across all school settings (Walker et al., 1996). The principles of Tier 1 interventions as described by

Fallon et al. (2012) "include explicitly teaching, modeling, and reinforcing positively stated expectations; increasing adult influence through active supervision; using data for decision making; and enhancing expected or desired learner behavior" (p. 210). This sets the stage for student learning and understanding of the expectations through the use of universal approaches that are consistently used throughout the school (Fallon et al., 2012; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Walker et al., 1996).

The Tier 1 level of interventions is where the recommended faculty buy-in of 80% becomes an important factor. This level is dependent upon teachers implementing the interventions, while being proactive in reinforcing the positive behaviors being exhibited by students (Flannery et al., 2009; Simonsen et al., 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Walker et al. (1996) discussed that interventions at this level "have perhaps the greatest potential for use by schools in establishing a positive school climate and effective school procedures that divert mildly at-risk students from a path leading to negative developmental outcomes" (p. 201). Walker further discussed that schools have a responsibility to address and help students who are considered to be at-risk, these students

> bring antisocial, aggressive behavior patterns with them to the schooling experience due to the multiple, nonschool risk factors to which they have been exposed early in their lives (i.e., poverty, abuse and neglect, family conflict, weak or incompetent parenting, drug and alcohol involvement of primary caregivers, dysfunctional family situations that are chaotic and highly unpredictable). (p. 195)

Despite the growing number of students who fall in the at-risk category, it is believed that SWPBIS encourages these students to follow the positive behaviors exhibited by others (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Richter et al., 2012; Walker et al., 2011). When students see the desired positive behaviors being exhibited by both their teachers and peers, it increases the likelihood of these behaviors being duplicated by others (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Richter et al., 2012). This increase of the desired behaviors also works toward reaching the goal of reducing the number of occurrences of negative behaviors (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Richter et al., 2012). These supports include active adult influence and supervision and enhancing the desired behavior that is expected (Fallon et al., 2012; Holloman & Yates, 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Tier 2, setting specific interventions. Just as in academic learning, some students will require extra levels of support in order to achieve the desired social, emotional, and behavioral expectations that are expected of all students (Fallon et al., 2012; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011). Tier 2 interventions are designed for the selected 5% to 15% of students who continue to struggle behaviorally after implementing Tier 1 interventions (Newcomer et al., 2013; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996). Students can be identified for Tier 2 supports through the evaluation of ODRs can also be referred for supports by teachers and parents (Newcomer et al., 2013). Scott et al. (2010) metaphorically applied to the process of identifying student in need of Tier 2 supports as taking the students who do not respond to Tier 1 interventions through a second pass of a machine that has been recalibrated to identify areas of weaknesses. This "second pass" is utilized as an attempt to match them with the interventions that best address these targeted areas (Scott et al., 2010)

Pugh and Chitiyo (2011) further define Tier 2 interventions as being "similar to primary interventions in scope except that at the secondary level, the interventions are adapted to the unique characteristics of each setting" (p. 49). While Tier 1 interventions take place across all settings throughout the school and implemented to all students, Tier 2 interventions are unique because they are implemented based on the specific behaviors that are being targeted (Newcomer et al., 2013; Scott et al., 2010). Examples of strategies that may be used as a part of Tier 2 interventions include: targeted interventions, small-group sessions, function-based interventions, behavior contracting, specialized tutoring, and mentoring (Fallon et al., 2012; Newcomer et al., 2013; Walker et al., 1996). Tier 2 interventions require additional levels of adult supervision and reinforcement as an integral part of determining the level of student success than what was required in Tier 1 (Fallon et al., 2012; Newcomer et al., 2013). This is accomplished with the use of specific descriptive praise, and the increased communication and involvement between stakeholders at home in addition to what occurs within the school environment (Newcomer et al., 2013).

Tier 3, individualized interventions. There are a smaller number of students (one percent to seven percent) who exhibit chronic behavioral problems and require individualized interventions in order to address their particular needs (Fallon et al., 2012; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011). This level of intervention is designed for reducing complex, intense, and severe behavior problems, which have become well-established within the student to the extent that they may engage in the behavior without realizing it or realizing that it is not an acceptable behavior (Richter et al., 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Students who are in need of Tier 3 supports are identified in a similar way to how they

were identified for Tier 2 supports, however there must be documented evidence showing that they are unresponsive to the targeted supports provided in Tier 2 (Simonsen & Sugai, 2013).

Interventions at the Tier 3 level are depicted by Walker et al., (1996) to be "based on comprehensive assessments of the problem and the organization of strategies that incorporate information obtained from these assessments" (p. 202). At this level of interventions, the decision making team is responsible for determining and implementing interventions which become more specialized and may include individuals representing different backgrounds and agencies to determine the best approach to be taken for a particular student (Walker et al., 1996, Scott et al., 2010). Strategies at this level may include: direct observations, person-centered planning, functional behavior assessments, and targeted social skills instruction (Scott et al., 2010). These straetgies require more time and resources to conduct and develop (Fallon et al., 2012; Scott et al., 2010; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). This serves to identify what is reinforcing and maintaining the negative behavior, while determining ways to teach the desired replacement behaviors to the student by identifying a greater reinforcing factor that motivates the student (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011).

Why SWPBIS?

The SWPBIS leadership team is required to obtain and maintain a high level of fidelity when reinforcing and implementing the rules, expectations, and interventions for the SWPBIS program to be successful (Miramontes et al., 2011). While there are many programs available to address the school climate and bullying, many schools implement SWPBIS due to the high social validity that is associated with the program outcomes

(Miramontes et al., 2011). The majority of programs on the market requires specific materials and activities to be utilized as part of the program, despite its relevance to the student and school needs (Miramontes et al., 2011). SWPBIS has been defined as a problem-solving approach for reducing problematic behaviors through the use of individualized interventions and strategies that match the behaviors being exhibited (Bambara et al., 2012; Chitiyo et al., 2011; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). Newton et al., (2011) described the SWPBIS process as being more of a blueprint than a prescribed program of interventions. Newton et al. also said, "states and school districts follow a standard blueprint to achieve implementation of SWPBIS. One aspect of this blueprint involves establishing a leadership team charged with increasing the school system's capacity to do its own SWPBIS training, coaching, evaluation, and coordination" (p. 230).

SWPBIS does not mandate the use of specific intervention strategies to be used for all students exhibiting the same or similar behavior (Bambara et al., 2012; Chitiyo et al., 2011; Fallon, et al., 2012). This allows the school to develop targeted approaches, which maintains cultural sensitivity, that can be blanketed across all environments, while addressing the differences between the individual students and/or settings (Bambara et al., 2012; Chitiyo et al., 2011; Fallon et al., 2012). According to Chitiyo et al. (2011), unlike traditional discipline techniques, SWPBIS interventions "are flexible and can be implemented in a variety of contexts: school-wide, classroom-wide, non-classroom (e.g., cafeteria, hallways, bus playground, parking lot) and individual" (p. 171). These interventions are designed to develop student understanding of the desired behavior expectations across all settings and are designed upon examination of problem behaviors

that students have exhibited within these settings (Bambara et al., 2012; Chitiyo et al., 2011; Irvin et al., 2006; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996).

Traditional discipline. When it comes to disciplining students, teachers and administrators often overlook that all children are different. When a student misbehaves at school, they are usually prescribed a selected disciplinary action. This prescribed action is taken without considering the idea that the selected action may be a reinforcing factor that is maintaining the behavior (Bambara et al., 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Sullivan, Klingbeil, & Van Norman, 2013). Sugai and Horner (2002) pointed out that "most school conduct codes and discipline handbooks detail consequence sequences designed to 'teach' these students that they have violated a school rule, and that their 'choice' of behaviors will not be tolerated" (p. 25). Using behavior management strategies that involve the removal from school and classroom activities have shown to produce additional behavior challenges for some students because it reinforces their removal from undesired activities (Simonson & Sugai, 2013; Sullivan et al., 2013; Walker et al., 1996).

Sullivan et al. (2013) noted, "educators commonly use exclusionary discipline strategies (i.e., suspension and expulsion) to address students' problem behavior even though they are ineffective for reducing unwanted behavior and are associated with academic failure, dropout, and family disruption" (p. 99). The use of these discipline strategies does not account for individual or cultural differences, which has led to a disproportionate number of students who are African-American and of low socioeconomic status being disciplined more frequently (Chitiyo et al., 2010; Irvin et al.,

2006; Rocque, 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Sullivan et al., 2013; Walker et al., 1996). Sullivan et al. also noted that

> nationally representative estimates from 2003 indicated that Black students were more than twice as likely as White students to be suspended, whereas Hispanic and Native American students were 10% and 20% more likely to be suspended, respectively; Asian students had the lowest suspension rates. (p. 100)

These discipline practices have created an inaccurate picture of discipline problems occurring within the schools (Payne & Welch, 2010; Rocque, 2010; Sullivan et al., 2013; Walker et al., 1996).

Effects on school environment. While traditional discipline strategies have led to adverse effects on student behavior, engagement, and quality of life outcomes, implementing SWPBIS has shown to have a positive impact on both the students and the school (Miramontes et al., 2011; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; et al., 2012; Wright & McCurdy, 2011). Sugai and Horner (2002) believe that developing a prevention plan that focuses on reinforcing positive behaviors leads to "improvements in social behavior and school climate by adopting constructive disciplinary practices (e.g., teaching and encouraging school expectations and behaviors) which led to reductions of vandalism, assaults, and other antisocial behavior" (p. 27). Using a proactive and preventative approach towards reducing the presence of negative behaviors helps reduce the number of ODRs and preserves the limited instructional time that teachers have with their students (Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Reinke et al., 2013; Simonsen et al., 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2002). Simonsen et al. (2011) determined that

> each ODR corresponded to approximately 20 minutes of lost instructional time for a student and each student experienced a 6-hour (360-min) school day. They found, on average, 79.5 days of instructional time were saved per year as a result of implementing SWPBIS. (p. 12)

Increasing the amount of instructional time a student receives, as a result of SWPBIS, produces an overall improvement of deficits in reading and math, which has a positive effect on student achievement (Chitiyo et al., 2011; Simonsen et al., 2011; Walker et al., 1996).

Summary of SWPBIS

Using SWPBIS can be an effective strategy to reduce the occurrence of problematic behaviors, such as bullying, throughout the school environment (Pugh & Chitiyo, 2011; Reinke et al., 2013). In order for the desired changes to be made, the program needs be implemented using evidenced-based interventions increases the likelihood that consistency and fidelity are maintained (Chitiyo et al., 2011; Reinke et al., 2013; Simonsen et al., 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2002). SWPBIS allow schools to provide more individualized support to meet their particular needs, rather than using a blanketed program that may not meet a school's specific problem areas (Miramontes et al., 2011). SWPBIS allows the use of the same blueprint for success by tailoring it across multiple schools. The idea of SWPBIS being a blueprint approach, allows for schools and students to achieve a high level of success because each school can tailor the program to meet their particular needs (Newton et al., 2011).

Theoretical Frameworks

An adolescent's behavior can be affected by multiple factors that motivate and reinforce their engagement in both positive and negative behaviors. Researchers examining bullying and SWPBIS offer explanations and predictors for these behaviors through theories of behavioral development, such as general strain theory (GST) and social cognitive theory (SCT).

GST places emphasis on the idea that behavior is affected by events and social relationships which they take part of or witness occurring around them, referred to as strains (Agnew, 1985; Froggio, 2007; Moon, Hwang, & McCluskey, 2011; Moon & Morash, 2013; Moon, Morash, & McClusky, 2012: Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). The presence of these strains can lead adolescents to engage in delinquent types of behaviors, such as bullying, as a coping mechanism and response towards handling these strains (Agnew, 1985; Agnew, Matthews, Bucher, Welcher, & Keyes, 2008; Aluede et al., 2008; Kaufman, Rebellon, Thaxton, & Agnew, 2008; Moon et al., 2011; Moon & Morash, 2013). These strains can negatively affect a student both behaviorally and academically at school, because of their inability to cope with these strains in a positive manner, which reinforces the ideas behind SWPBIS (Moon et al., 2011; Moon et al., 2012; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013; Walker et al., 1996).

SCT focuses on the idea that behaviors are learned through observation of others within situational contexts, which provides reinforcement that controls and maintains both positive and negative behaviors (Bandura, 2002b; Bandura, 2002c; Farmer & Xie, 2013; Lin, 2010; Molano, Jones, Brown, & Aber, 2013). This idea provides reinforcement for the development of bullying and other negative types of behavior in

adolescents who are surrounded by these or similar types of behaviors (Bandura, 2002a; Carrera et al., 2011; Low et al., 2013; Packman et al., 2005; Stoltz et al., 2013; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Using SWPBIS allows for these types of behaviors to be addressed, while working on reducing and/or eliminating their presence, by modeling and teaching the desired replacement behaviors (Bambara et al., 2012; Bandura, 2002b; Carr et al., 2002; Chitiyo et al., 2011; Fallon et al., 2012; Scott et al., 2010; Walker et al., 1996).

General Strain Theory

Student behavior can be explained by the variables that are occurring throughout their lives (Agnew, 1985; Froggio, 2007; Moon et al., 2012; Moon & Morash, 2013; Moon et al., 2011; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). Variables that are viewed as having a negative impact on an individual are referred to as strains (Agnew, 1985; Froggio, 2007; Moon et al., 2011; Moon et al., 2012; Moon & Morash, 2013; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). GST focuses on the idea that individuals experience strain whenever they are unable to experience the success that they desire or feel they need or deserve (Agnew et al., 2008; Baron, 2008; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). This may lead to their emotions taking control of their judgment, which causes them to engage in negative actions in order to feel better about themselves (Agnew et al., 2008; Baron, 2008; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). Although there are several variations of the definition of GST, Robert Agnew's variation has become the most widely accepted (Baron, 2008; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). Agnew's increased focus on the strains present in an adolescent's life, includes variables outside of educational and occupational goals, and has also become an accepted explanation for juvenile delinquency (Moon & Morash, 2013). Agnew (1985) defined GST as the "idea that delinquency results when individuals are unable to achieve their goals through

legitimate channels. In such cases, individuals may turn to illegitimate channels of goal achievement or strike out at the source of their frustration in anger" (p. 151). Unlike adults, adolescents are limited in the avenues and resources that can help alleviate the presence of strain within their lives (Agnew et al., 2008; Froggio, 2007). This is due to their dependence on their home situation, for example, adolescents have limited access to financial resources in order to obtain items of value (Agnew et al., 2008; Baron, 2008; Froggio, 2007).

The exact sources of strain are unique to an individual and their life situations (Agnew et al., 2008; Froggio, 2007). Potential sources of strain include: failure to achieve goals; parental rejection; negative relationships with teachers; discipline viewed by students as being aversive or unfair; abuse and neglect; negative experiences; occupation; homelessness; negative peer relationships; criminal victimization; stressful life events; and discrimination (Agnew et al., 2008; Froggio, 2007; Hay, Meldrum, & Mann, 2010; Moon et al., 2011; Moon et al., 2012; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). Adolescents who experience strain may exhibit a range of negative emotions, which may lead to delinquent behaviors (Agnew et al., 2008; Kaufman et al., 2013; Thaxton & Agnew, 2008; Moon & Morash, 2013; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). According to Moon and Morash (2012), the idea that "strains and negative emotions result in delinquent behavior depends on conditioning factors such as a youth's relationship to parents, problem-solving ability, self-control, association with delinquent peers, and coping skills" (p. 887). Furthermore, adolescents are more likely to engage in anti-social and delinquent types of behaviors when they associate with peers who already engage in

negative behaviors or have negative relationships with the adult role models in their lives (Froggio, 2007; Hay et al., 2010; Moon et al., 2011).

Effects and implications of GST. Just as every individual is unique in the goals that they set for themselves, the same holds true for the way they react to different sources of strain that are present within their lives (Agnew, 1985; Baron, 2008; Hay et al., 2010; Moon et al., 2011; Moon & Morash, 2013). Agnew (1985) argued that adolescents have a faster reaction to the presence of strain in their lives than adults, due to the nature of the goals they set and the self-imposed time frames for achieving these goals. Agnew also discussed that

> adolescents will be more interested in the achievement of immediate goals rather than long-range goals like monetary success. The immediate goals of adolescents may include such things as popularity with peers, good grades, doing well in athletics, and getting along with parents. (p. 153)

The idea of achieving short-term goals can set the stage for their sense of goal achievement later in life; this can create problems with their immediate behavior and increase the likelihood that they will engage in delinquent or bullying type behaviors (Agnew, 1985; Baron, 2008; Moon et al., 2011).

Baron (2008) used the example of an individual who is unemployed and became frustrated in their unsuccessful hunt for employment to further examine the effects that a particular strain may have on an individual. Baron continued to argue that an individual who is "continuing to search for work, espousing a work ethic, and showing commitment to work while not being able to secure employment may – directly or through their conditioning impact on unemployment – create anger, which in turn can lead to crime"

(p. 404). This can create further strain on the individual's relationships due to the feeling of inadequacy that may be felt as a result of their inability to achieve their goal of obtaining employment (Agnew et al., 2008; Baron, 2008; Froggio, 2007; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). In addition to economic strain, this may also induce negative emotions that stem from feelings of anger and inadequacy (Froggio, 2007; Hay et al., 2010; Kaufman et al., 2008; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). This can lead to the development of frustration, depression, and anxiety, while placing further strain on relationships with others (both professional and personal) and lead to an increased likelihood of an individual engaging in criminal activity (Froggio, 2007; Hay et al., 2010; Kaufman et al., 2008; Moon et al., 2012; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004).

Adolescents, who experience a considerable amount of strain in their lives, also exhibit similar frustrations as a result of the events that are taking place around them (Baron, 2008; Moon & Morash, 2013). Moon and Morash (2013) stated "strained youths are more likely to commit violent, property-related, and status delinquent behaviors" (p. 899). These types of negative behaviors that are used as their methods for dealing with the strains in their lives can differ in severity (Moon et al., 2011; Moon & Morash, 2013; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). Predictors of negative behaviors in adolescents can include the types of relationships that are held with their peers, parents, and teachers. (Moon et al., 2012; Moon & Morash, 2013; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). This negative relationship also serves as a potential indicator between adolescents who engage in bullying behaviors and the likelihood of their engaging in criminal activity later in life (Agnew et al., 2008; Moon et al., 2011; Moon & Morash, 2013).

Theoretical Relationships

The idea behind GST and its explanation of an adolescent's behavior lies in the emphasis of anger being the key emotion (Moon et al., 2012). As previously discussed, adolescents are limited in the ways they alleviate the feeling of stress they may experience within their lives (Agnew et al., 2008; Hay et al, 2010; Moon & Morash, 2008). This limitation impairs their abilities to address a negative situation a positive manner (Agnew, 1985; Agnew et al., 2008; Hay et al., 2010; Moon & Morash, 2013). Their limited ability for handling stress can lead to lower levels of self-control, which further enhances the likelihood that they will engage in delinquent behaviors because they received the desired immediate gratification (Agnew, 1985; Agnew et al., 2008; Kaufman et al., 2008; Moon et al., 2011; Moon & Morash, 2013).

General strain theory and bullying. The effect of strain on an individual's life causing them to engage in delinquent types of behaviors has potential links to bullying (Hay et al., 2010; Moon et al., 2011). Adolescents who experience physical and/or emotional abuse are more directly connected to bullying and other potential delinquent behaviors as a result of the increased presence of negative behaviors (Froggio, 2007; Hay et al., 2010; Moon et al., 2011). This idea is reinforced when the presence of strain violates an individual's right to human dignity, privacy, freedom, and security (Aluedeet al., 2008).

Moon et al. (2008) confirmed the findings from prior studies which state that victims of bullying who suffer from anger and depression as a result of the presence of strain in their lives "typically exhibit pessimistic views of themselves and others are more likely to engage in self-destructive deviant behaviors (i.e., taking illegal drugs, running

away) and/or aggressive behaviors (i.e., bullying) toward others" (p. 870). Victims of bullying already experience a high level of strain which causes them to stand out as being different (Hay et al., 2010; Moon et al., 2011; Moon et al., 2012; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). Also, being targeted by a bully can create further emotional strain, which may lead to engaging in negative behavior, such as self-harm (Aluede et al., 2008; Agnew et al., 2008; Froggio, 2007; Hay et al., 2010; Moon et al., 2011; Moon et al., 2012; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004).

The same holds true for those who bully others as a result of the strain that they are experiencing in their lives (Agnew, 1985; Agnew et al., 2008; Hay et al., 2010; Moon & Morash, 2013; Solberg, Olweus, & Endresen, 2007). Adolescents who engage in bullying behaviors because of the emotional effects of strain, may be influenced by their relationships and behaviors of their families and support networks (Aluede et al., 2008; Moon & Morash, 2013; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). Aluede et al. (2008) pointed out that bullies may engage in these behaviors as their "way of dealing with difficult situations at home such as broken homes, or partial separation from parents. Some bullies may see their behaviors as normal because they grow up from families in which everyone regularly gets angry and shouts" (p. 151). Negative relationships can increase the likelihood that an adolescent may engage in bullying and delinquent behaviors in order to cope with the strain in their lives or because they may not have developed the ability to react to this positively (Agnew et al., 2008; Froggio, 2007; Moon et al., 2011; Thaxton & Agnew, 2004). Not all cases of bullying are a result of the presence of strain from a negative relationship, instead it may result from the need to reach a particular goal or

achieve a greater level of power and authority over others (Agnew, 1985; Agnew et al., 2008; Kaufman et al., 2008; Moon et al., 2011; Moon & Morash, 2013).

General strain theory and school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports. The presence of strain in an adolescent's life can lead to bullying and delinquent behaviors (Moon et al., 2011; Moon et al., 2012; Walker et al., 1996). This strain can affect their academic and behavioral performance at school (Moon et al., 2012; Walker et al., 1996). School-wide positive behavior interventions and supports (SWPBIS) can be used a proactive school-based approach to help students develop positive ways of coping with the specific types of strain in their lives (Moon et al., 2012; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013; Walker et al., 1996). The presence of students exhibiting negative behaviors within the school setting may have a trickle effect on the students due to the effect it may have on their goal achievement (Agnew, 1985; Agnew et al., 2008; Moon et al., 2012; Walker et al., 1996). Using the three-tier process of supports and interventions as part of the SWPBIS process, focuses on teaching students positive and socially accepted replacement behaviors, but can aid in the identification of specific sources of strain that are reinforcing the negative behavior (Agnew, 1985; Scott et al., 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996).

Social Cognitive Theory

Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) can be explained as the behavior that an adolescent exhibits as the result of their reaction to a particular stimulus (Bandura, 2002b; Lin, 2010). This response is based upon what the individual has learned through observing others in a variety of situations (Bandura, 2002b; Lin, 2010). These learned behaviors are based on the context of the situation, but also the environment, peer

relationships, cultural norms and values that are present along with the individual's morals and self-efficacy, their self-perceived ability to reach their own goals (Bandura, 2002b; Bandura, 2002c; Farmer & Xie, 2013; Lin, 2010; Molano et al., 2013). Bandura (2002c) discussed the idea that people's lives are shaped by "their shared values, customs, social practices, and institutional constraints and opportunity structures" (p. 274). Behavior is maintained by several controlling factors and processes, such as the opportunities that an individual is provided with, along with the obstacles that they work toward overcoming to achieve their goals (Bandura, 2002a; Wood & Bandura, 1989). SCT explains how these factors control human behavior (Bandura, 2002a; Bandura & McDonald, 1963; Lin, 2010; Stoltz, Deković, Van Londen, Orobio de Castro, & Prinzie; 2013; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Webb, Sniehotta, and Michie (2010) described SCT as the "relationship between beliefs and behavior as a reciprocal learning process in which people select, react to and learn from experiences" (pp. 1886-1887). This theory has provided an explanation for describing the reasons why individuals engage in certain behaviors and the potential causes, from the cognitive, personal, and environmental factors that may control and reinforce this behavior (Bandura & McDonald, 1963; Lin, 2010; Martin, 2004; Webb et al., 2010; Wood & Bandura, 1989). The reinforcing processes that shape and control human behavior are controlled through an individual self-efficacy and outside environmental factors. Together these determine whether or not a particular behavior is considered to be socially acceptable (Lin, 2010; Poulou & Norwich, 2002; Stoltz et al., 2013).

Bandura's theory points to self-efficacy as being a key determining factor of an individual's because of the direct influence it has on their goals and aspirations (Bandura, 2002a; Lin, 2010; Poulou & Norwich, 2002). Bandura (2002a) believed that "the stronger the perceived efficacy the higher the goal challenges people set for themselves and the firmer their commitment to them. Efficacy beliefs shape the outcomes people expect their efforts to produce" (p. 3). According to Webb et al. (2010):

> Self-efficacy beliefs are deemed to be constructed from four sources: (i) enactive mastery experiences (e.g. a personal quit attempt). (ii) vicarious experiences (e.g. modeling the experiences of another). (iii) verbal persuasion (e.g. a close friend expressing faith in one's abilities) and (iv) physiological and affective states (e.g. bodily feedback). (p. 1887)

An individual's level of self-efficacy can determine which obstacles they are willing to overcome and the level of effort and self-regulation they are willing to engage in to meet these goals (Bandura, 2002a; Bandura, 2002b; Martin, 2004; Poulou & Norwich, 2002). However as Bandura (2002a) discussed, an individual's self-efficacy can also be influenced by their social groups. Bandura also stated that the "perceived collective efficacy raises people's vision of what they wish to achieve, enhances motivational commitment to their missions, strengthens resilience to adversity, and enhances performance accomplishments" (p. 3). The social influence over self-efficacy has long-term effects that may begin with childhood relationships. In addition, support that is provided by adults and peers outside of the individual's social group also has an impact on their level of self-efficacy (Bandura & McDonald, 1963; Caprara, Barbaranelli,

Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000; Farmer & Xie, 2013; Molano et al., 2013; Stoltz et al., 2013).

Effects and implications. SCT also offers an explanation for the idea that an individual's self-efficacy can be a key factor for explaining behavior (Bandura, 2002a; Wood & Bandura, 1989). This further explains an individual's level of motivation toward engaging in specific behaviors and in setting goals (Bandura, 2002a; Wood & Bandura, 1989). According to Wood and Bandura (1989), "people are motivated by the successes of others who are similar to themselves, but they are discouraged from pursuing behaviors that they have seen often result in adverse consequences" (p. 363). Self-efficacy and social relationships also affect the learning and self-regulation of behaviors through both internal and external support (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Additional guidance that provides needed support and encouragement increases the likelihood that these particular behaviors will continue to occur (Bandura, 2002a; Bandura, 2002b; Bandura & McDonald, 1963; Caprara et al., 2000; Farmer & Xie, 2013; Lin, 2010; Martin, 2004; Molano et al., 2013; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Individuals who have high levels of self-efficacy are likely to set long-term goals that are more difficult to achieve and hold a higher level of commitment towards reaching that goal, whereas the opposite is the case for individuals with low levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 2002a; Caprara et al., 2000). Wood and Bandura (1989) discussed that goals provide individuals with a "sense of purpose and direction, and they raise and sustain the level of effort needed to reach them. When people are unclear about what they are trying to accomplish, their motivation is low and their efforts are poorly directed" (p. 367). Goals and the receipt of social reinforcement further direct and motivate behavior and the

development of a positive overall self-perception (Farmer & Xie, 2013; Stoltz et al., 2013; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Theoretical Relationships

Social cognitive theory provides an explanation for adolescent behavior through the idea that an individual's social environment influences what they determine to be acceptable behavior and their ability to self-regulate (Bandura, 2002a; Bandura, 2002b; Martin, 2004; Wood & Bandura, 1989). That is, "individuals adopt standards of right and wrong that serve as guides and deterrents for conduct" (Bandura, 2002b, p. 102) through the development of their self-regulatory processes (Bandura, 2002a; Bandura, 2002b; Caprara et al., 2000; Molano et al., 2013; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Adolescents who exhibit socially unacceptable behaviors often use this to achieve their desired goals and outcomes through self-satisfaction and do not consider any potential negative consequences that may result (Stoltz et al., 2013; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Changing these negative behaviors often require the use of specific and explicit interventions that can provide meaningful access to their desired goals and outcomes (Bandura, 2002a; Bandura & McDonald, 1963; Stoltz et al., 2013; Webb et al., 2010; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Social cognitive theory and bullying. SCT offers an explanation for adolescents who engage in bullying behaviors as a result of their individual social learning environment that may be present in the home or through the social relationships they have developed (Aluede et al., 2008; Bandura et al., 2002a; Carrera et al., 2011). The idea that an individual's social systems further reinforces their continued engagement in bullying types of behaviors. Packman et al. (2005) discussed the idea of social

reinforcement and the effect it plays on the continued presence of the behavior. These authors noted, "If a larger percentage of bystanders experience a thrill from observing one student oppress another, then perhaps that group of students could be swayed to counter the bullying behaviors in a group of like-minded peers" (p. 550). Wood and Bandura (1989) also reinforce this with the idea that "people may adopt functional patterns of behavior, which constitute proven skills and established customs, in essentially the same form as they are exemplified" (p. 363). When an adolescent's peer group provides reinforcement for the negative behaviors, they also provide the rewarding outcome which makes it more likely for this behavior to continue (Bandura, 2002a; Carrera et al., 2011; Low et al., 2013; Packman et al., 2005; Stoltz et al., 2013; Wood & Bandura, 1989). This further exemplifies this behavior with the idea that eventually the occurrence of the desired behavior will increase to a higher level and lead to the development of internal motivation as the primary reinforcer (Bandura, 2002b; Packman et al., 2005; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Adolescents with low levels of self-efficacy are likely to continue to engage in bullying behaviors due to the level of success they experience through continued receipt of positive attention, which they may not have previously experienced (Bandura, 2002a; Bandura, 2002c; Good et al., 2001). Aluede et al. (2008) point out that "bullies pick on others because they need a victim (someone who seems emotionally or physically weaker), or because they try to gain acceptance and feel more important, popular, or in control" (pp. 151-152). This idea further elicits the desired social responses from their peers to provide them with the attention and success that they may not otherwise experience as a result of their low self-efficacy (Aluede et al., 2008; Bandura, 2002a;

Bandura & McDonald, 1963; Martin, 2004; Packman et al., 2005; Poulou & Norwich, 2002). The increased peer attention received by the bully as a result of their manipulation of the social relationships of their victim is one potential outcome of relational aggression (Aluede et al., 2008; Lansford et al., 2012; Low et al., 2013). Relational aggression is when an adolescent manipulates the social ties of the targeted individual in order to harm the social relationship of others (Aluede et al., 2008; Lansford et al., 2012; Low et al., 2013). This social manipulation provides further reinforcement for the person who is engaging in this behavior because it gives them the perception that they may have an extensive social network (Aluede et al., 2008; Bandura, 2002a; Lansford et al., 2012; Low et al., 2013; Martin, 2004; Sherer & Nickerson, 2010; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). The involvement of other individuals within a particular social group or multiple social groups prevents the person who initiates the social harm from feeling responsible because they are not acting alone (Bandura, 2002b). Bandura (2002b) further discusses the idea that "people act more cruelly under group responsibility than when they hold themselves personally accountable for their actions" (pp. 107-108). This sense provides further reinforcement that these behaviors are socially acceptable as a result of increased influence from their peer group (Bandura, 2002b; Yerger & Gehret, 2011).

Social cognitive theory and school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports. The use of SWPBIS are supported within SCT, based upon the idea that every student comes from a different home environment and provided with a different set of social and behavioral skills and expectations (Bambara et al., 2012; Bandura, 2002b; Bandura, 2002c; Carr et al., 2002; Chitiyo et al., 2011; Fallon et al., 2012; Farmer & Xie, 2013; Lin, 2010; Molano et al., 2013; Scott et al., 2010; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et

al., 1996). Every environment throughout society possesses different expectations and rules that may be different from the values that students are taught within their home environment (Caprera, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, & Zimbardo, 2000; Chitiyo et al., 2011; Molano et al., 2013). The differences in these rules may create a conflict in the way adolescents process and react to a particular situation (Bandura, 2002b; Caprara et al., 2000; Molano et al., 2013). However, the differences that are found within each of the environments can be found throughout the school environment (different classrooms, cafeteria, library, etc.) this may have a similar effect on a student's behavior because they experience difficulty in adapting to these differences (Carr et al., 2011; Chitiyo et al., 2011; Stotlz et al., 2013; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996). These differences may create a conflict between a student's understanding of the rules and expectations, which can foster the development of negative behaviors (Bandura, 2002a). Bandura (2002a) stated that "People make choices and motivate and regulate their behavior on the basis of belief systems" (p. 3). If there is a conflict present in an individual's belief system and the social expectations of a particular environment, the problem needs to be further examined by teachers and school leaders, to better understand the underlying purpose behind the behavior (Bandura, 2002a; Newcomer et al., 2013).

Adolescents who are unable to self-regulate and differentiate between the expectations associated with different environments tend to require interventions that are targeted to their particular needs (Fallon et al., 2012; Lin, 2010; Newcomer et al., 2013; Stoltz et al., 2013). This negative perception may be the result of negative consequences they have received due to a conflict between their idea of acceptable behavior in that particular environment compared to what is socially acceptable (Bambara et al., 2012;

Bandura, 2002b; Bandura & McDonald, 1963; Fallon et al., 2012; Lin, 2010; Poulou & Norwich, 2002; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013). Interventions that address these specific issues must be systematically taught, practiced, and maintained across multiple settings to increase their effectiveness, while improving the likelihood for generalization to occur (Bambara et al., 2012; Caprara et al., 2000; Martin, 2004; Reinke et al., 2013; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013; Stoltz et al., 2013; Wood & Bandura, 1989).

Summary

This chapter provided a discussion of the research literature related to the research focus of School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) and its effect on reducing the presence of bullying within the school environment. In addition, this chapter also discussed the theoretical emphasis that supports the focus of the study. Examining the research surrounding bullying provided a discussion of the types of bullying that occurs, along with its prevalence, and the presence of gender roles and how each of these have an effect on the overall presence of bullying. Research supports the use of SWPBIS in schools as a measure of support for improving the overall school climate, which can also contribute towards the increased feeling of safety among students.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study examined teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of SWPBIS at reducing the presence of bullying in middle schools. Data were collected using a quantitative approach to determine the effects of teachers' perceptions regarding specific factors of SWPBIS and the relationship toward their perceptions of bullying within the school. The instrument that was used to collect data for this study provided specific detailed questions that support the research questions presented, while collecting the perceptions of the teachers participating. This chapter further discusses the dependent and independent variables, along with the procedures that were used to collect data.

Research Design

This study used a quantitative approach to analyze the data collected for correlational analysis. Surveys were distributed to teachers in public middle and junior high schools in Mississippi (Appendix A). The survey included a section of questions addressing specific demographic information such as: the overall number of years of teaching experience, number of years teaching in their current school, and number of students enrolled at the school. The remainder of the survey included questions presented in a mixed format addressing both SWPBIS and bullying. The analysis of these demographic factors was used to determine if there is a correlation present and if it is related towards specific demographic factors, including school size and teaching experience, and its effect on the level of significance of the variables analyzed.

Participants

The participants in this study were certified public school teachers who teach at middle or junior high schools within the state of Mississippi. Each of the participants in the study must have taught a minimum of three years at their present school in order for their responses to be used. A designated individual was identified, at each participating school, to assist in the distribution and collection of surveys. This person was provided with copies of the survey instrument, consent letters, blank envelopes, instructions, and a postage paid pre-addressed envelope to return the surveys to the researcher. Whenever possible, the researcher attended faculty meetings at participating schools in order to distribute and collect the surveys. All participant responses were kept confidential while maintaining anonymity of the participants.

Instrumentation

This study was conducted using an instrument designed by the researcher (Appendix A), containing questions related to the research questions. The survey includes two sections that were answered by each participant. The first section consists of five demographic questions while the second section contains questions relating to both SWPBIS and bullying. These items were presented with specific response choices, such as the highest level of education completed, gender, and how they considered themselves as a student in regards to bullying. This section also contains questions in which the response choices include a number range, such as age, size of student population, and the number of years that SWPBIS has been implemented at their school. This section contains three open-response questions, which are race, number of years teaching, and number of years at present school; these response choices were analyzed

and coded based upon the responses provided, responses were coded accordingly (for example the response responses white and Caucasian will be coded together, as would black and African-American). The questions in the second section of the instrument were mixed, instead of being separated into separate sections based upon the variables being measured, to remove any potential bias opinion that may result from splitting the questions into different sections on the topics of SWPBIS and bullying. Table 1 shows which questions from part B correspond to the variable being measured. Each question in the second section of the instrument used a Likert scale consisting of five ratings: 1 Strongly Disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Neutral, 4 Agree, or 5 Strongly Agree.

Table 1

List of Variables and Corresponding Survey Questions from Part B

Variable	Questions
Teacher's perceptions of the student outcomes as a result of SWPBIS	2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 19
Teacher's perceptions of the presence of bullying within their school	1
Teacher's perceptions of bullying	3, 5, 6, 14, 16
Teacher's perceptions of their involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS	17, 18
Teacher's perceptions of the effectiveness of SWPBIS on reducing negative behaviors	12
Teacher's perceptions of fidelity of implementation of SWPBIS	7, 11, 13, 15

The first research question seeks to determine if a teacher's personal demographics has an effect on their perceptions of the student outcomes as a result of the

implementation of SWPBIS. In order to determine the effect, the researcher utilized a multiple linear regression using the following demographic questions from part A: one, three, four, five, and seven as independent variables in order to determine if the teacher's demographics have an effect on their perceptions of the student outcomes as a result of SWPBIS. Student outcomes as a result if the implementation of SWPBIS, the dependent variable, is addressed in questions 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, and 19 from part B (Table 1).

The second research question seeks to determine if the way a teacher's perceptions of their involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS has an effect on the way they perceive the presence of bullying within their school. In order to determine if there is an effect, the researcher utilized Pearson's Correlation, between teachers' perception of the current presence of bullying, the occurrence of students engaging in bullying behaviors, within their school compared to when they began teaching at that school, question 1 from part B (Table 1). This was compared to teachers' perception of their involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS, including the planning and implementation of interventions and/or rewards along with reviewing student data; this is addressed in questions 17 and 18 from part B (Table 1) in order to determine if the presence of a correlation between these two variables.

The third research question seeks to determine if a teacher's perceptions of their past experience with bullying has an effect on their perceptions of the presence of bullying in their school. The researcher utilized a ANCOVA to determine the effect that a teacher's past experience with bullying, as the bully (victim, both, or bystander), question 8 from part A, being utilized as the independent variable; in addition, this question will examine the independent variable using gender and age, questions 3 and 4 from part A, as

covariates in order to determine if either of these factors affected the responses. The dependent variable measures a teacher's perceptions of bullying, which is addressed by questions 3, 5, 6, 14 and 16 from part B, which includes the frequency, location, and nature of the occurrence of bullying in the school.

The fourth research question seeks to determine if a teacher's perceptions of the fidelity, consistent implementation of interventions with integrity by all staff members, in implementing SWPBIS has an effect on reducing students' negative behaviors at school. In order to determine if there is an effect, a regression was utilized with teachers' perceptions regarding the fidelity in the implementation of SWPBIS. For this analysis, question 12, from part B, was used as the dependent variable by examining whether or not a teacher's perceptions a reduction of discipline referrals, which can reflect upon an overall reduction of negative student behaviors. The independent variables for this question are the teacher's perceptions of the fidelity of implementation of SWPBIS within their school, which was addressed with questions 7, 11, 13, and 15. This question also utilized gender and school size, questions 3 and 6, as independent variables to determine if they have an effect on teachers' perception of whether or not SWPBIS has an effect on a reducing the number of discipline referrals and negative student behaviors.

Prior to conducting the study, a panel of experts was selected to determine the instrument's validity. For this study, the panel of experts was made up of individuals, at one of the school districts that agreed to participate in the study, who have worked extensively with their school's SWPBIS program in a leadership role. These individuals include teachers who serve on the school's teacher support team as part of the RTI process, the school counselor, and individuals who have taken a proactive role in

assisting with planning student activities and interventions. Following the receipt of their recommendations, a pilot study group was selected within one of the schools participating in the study. A group of teachers was selected to participate in the pilot study specifically on the basis in which they meet the qualification criteria of having taught full-time in that particular school for at least five year. Upon the completion of the survey by the pilot study group, the data was entered into SPSS and analyzed by conducting a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient test in order to determine the reliability of the survey instrument. For the full study the variable Teacher's perceptions of bullying had an Cronbach's Alpha of .456, which is concerning. This may be contributed to questions that were poorly worded and misunderstood by participants outside of the pilot group; this may also be contributed to individual differences in the understanding of behaviors that could be considered as bullying.

Table 2

Cronbach's Alpha Results for Pilot Study

Variable	Pilot Study	Full Study
Teacher's perceptions of the student outcomes as a result of SWPBIS	.880	.810
Teacher's perceptions of bullying	.771	.456
Teacher's perceptions of their involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS	.731	.771
Teacher's perceptions of fidelity of implementation of SWPBIS	.758	.793

Procedures

In order to obtain permission to conduct the survey, the researcher sought permission from superintendents in the southern six counties of Mississippi by submitting a written request (Appendix B). Following receipt of written permission from superintendents, the researcher then sought permission from principals (Appendix C). Permission was sought from all middle school principals in districts in which the superintendent granted permission for the researcher to distribute surveys. Once permission was received from principals, the researcher then sought permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct the study (Appendix D). Upon receipt of IRB approval, building principals were contacted in order to coordinate the distribution of the surveys at a faculty meeting or to deliver the surveys and consent letters to a designated individual and provide training for administering the surveys. As a result of varying circumstances that may prevent the researcher from personally delivering the surveys to the designated individual, surveys were delivered through the United States Postal Service. Each package mailed will contain copies of the surveys, consent letters, envelopes (for participants to seal their completed surveys), instructions, and a self-addressed stamped envelope for surveys to be returned to the researcher. Surveys that will be delivered, and not administered by the researcher, were also provided with envelopes for participants to seal their completed surveys, along with an large envelope for the designated individual to seal all completed surveys for return to the researcher.

Participants will receive a copy of an informed consent letter (Appendix E), for their records, along with a copy of the survey (Appendix A). Upon the receipt of the informed consent letter and the survey, the researcher, or designated individual, provided

verbal explanation and instructions highlighting the information contained within the informed consent letter and providing the definitions and explanation of SWPBIS and bullying as it relates to this study using the provided script (Appendix F). Once each participant completes the survey, they sealed their completed survey, in the envelope provided, and return it to the designated individual or researcher. If a designated individual is used to distribute and collect the surveys, instead of the researcher, they collected and returned all sealed completed surveys in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided.

Limitations

This study is being conducted using quantitative research to examine teacher perceptions of SWPBIS and the effect it has on reducing the presence of bullying in middle schools. This method of research limits this study to the examination of specific factors that are identified by the researcher and included in the survey instrument. As a result, additional unidentified factors, which may affect a teacher's perceptions are not considered in the analysis.

Data Analysis

This study examines teacher perceptions of the effectiveness of SWPBIS at reducing the presence of bullying in middle schools. For the purpose of this study, the dependent variables are the perceptions that the teachers hold towards: the presence of bullying within their school, their perception towards the frequency of bullying among students, and the effects that SWPBIS has towards improving the overall school climate (such as increased attendance and improved student academic performance). The independent variables in this study include: the implementation of SWPBIS within the

school and teacher perceptions of its effectiveness, along with teachers' attitudes toward their role in the implementation of SWPBIS.

Data collected from the survey was inputted into SPSS for statistical analysis using multiple statistical measures, such as linear regression, ANCOVA, and descriptive statistics, in order to answer the research questions presented in this study. The data were sorted by demographic information provided by the participants, in part 1 of the survey. This was done to determine if these factors were potentially influenced the responses to the questions, in addition to determining if there are any statistically significant differences between the responses provided by different respondent demographics.

Summary

This chapter discussed the plan for data collection and research analysis to examine teacher perceptions of SWPBIS and its effectiveness at reducing the presence of bullying in middle schools. All participants in this study are current middle school teachers with at least three years of full-time teaching experience at their current school. Each of the participants will complete a two-section paper survey (Appendix A), which consists of demographic questions, along with questions related to SWPBIS and bullying. Prior to participants completing the survey, a designated individual at each school read from the provided script (Appendix B) to summarize the informed consent letter and to provide an explanation of the definitions of SWPBIS and bullying as it relates to this study. All precautions were taken to ensure the confidentiality of each district, school, and participant completing the survey. The data collected was analyzed to further explore and answer each of the research questions presented in this study.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine teacher perceptions as to whether or not the use of SWPBIS had an effect on the presence of bullying in middle schools. Surveys were distributed in February 2015 to ten middle schools in Southern Mississippi. In order to participate in the study, participants needed to have at least three years of full-time teaching experience at their current school in order for their responses to be included in the data analysis. Of the two hundred fifty surveys distributed, 79 surveys (31.6%) were returned completed and valid for analysis. An additional 11 surveys were returned but were not complete and valid for analysis. This chapter will discuss the findings as a result of the data analysis of the completed surveys.

Descriptive Data

Participants were asked to respond to several demographics questions which included: total number years of full-time teaching experience, the number of years of full-time teaching experience at their current school, age, gender, highest level of education they have completed, a self-evaluation of how they would consider themselves as a student in relation to bullying, and the number of students enrolled at their school. Descriptive statistics were utilized to describe the demographic information that was provided by the participants. Frequency tables were utilized to display the demographic make up of the participants. Table 3 describes the frequency and percentage of the participants based on total years of full-time teaching experience, years of full-time teaching experience at their current school, age, gender, and the highest level of education completed.

Most of the participants, 22.8% each, had 0-5 total years or 6-10 total years of full-time teaching experience (18). While only 15.2% (12) had 21 or more total years of full-time teaching experience. The number of years of full-time teaching experience that teachers have at their current school shows a shift in these numbers, most teachers, 43.0% (34), have 0-5 years of teaching experience at their current school. The smallest percentage of teachers, 3.8% (3) have been at their current school for 21 or more years. Upon examining the gender information of the participants, most of the participants 73.4% (58) were female. The age range of the teachers that responded to the survey were somewhat evenly distributed with the majority of participants 32.9% (26) fell in the 30-39 age range, while the fewest number of teachers 22.8% (18) fell in the 40-49 age range. The majority of participants 91.1% (72) identified themselves as being Caucasian. The majority of the participants, 55.7% (44), reported that their highest degree obtained Masters.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentages of Participants

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Total Years of Full-Time Teaching Experience		
0-5	18	22.8
6-10	18	22.8
11-15	16	20.3
16-20	15	19.0
21 or more	12	15.2

Table 3 (continued).

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Total Years of Full-Time Teaching Experience at Current School		
0-5	34	43.0
6-10	19	24.1
11-15	10	12.7
16-20	13	16.5
21 or more	3	3.8
Gender		
Male	19	24.1
Female	58	73.4
Prefer not to Say	2	2.5
Age		
20-29	15	19.0
30-39	26	32.9
40-49	18	22.8
50-59	20	25.3
60 or above	0	0.0
Race		
Caucasian	72	91.1
African American	4	5.1
Prefer not to Say	3	3.8

Table 3 (continued).

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Highest Level of Education Completed		
Bachelor's	34	43.0
Master's	44	55.7
Specialist	0	0.0
Doctorate	1	1.3

Participants were asked to evaluate their involvement with bullying as a student, this information is shown in Table 4. Most of the participants 60.8% (48) indicated that they were not involved with bullying. None of the participants indicated that they were the bully, while 8.9% (7) indicated that they were the victim.

Table 5 displays the distribution of participants based upon school size. The

Table 4

Self-Evaluation of Involvement with Bullying as a Student

Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
Bully	0	0.0
Victim	7	8.9
Both	10	12.7
Bystander	14	17.7
Not Involved	48	60.8

majority of participants 48.1% (38) indicated that they teach at a school with a population of 451-600 students, 44.3% (35) with 600 or more, and 7.6% (6) with 301-450.

Table 5

Student Population Size

Population	Frequency	Percentage
0-150	0	0.0
151-300	0	0.0
301-450	6	7.6
451-600	38	48.1
600 or more	35	44.3

Part B of the survey used a Likert scale to evaluate teacher responses towards specific items of interest in relation to the research questions presented. This section of the survey presented the questions in a mixed format, rather than categorical, to reduce the potential for participant bias when responding to each question. Descriptive statistics were calculated for the items in this section. The descriptive statistics below are grouped together by the research question they address.

Table 6 provides the means and standard deviations regarding teacher perceptions of student outcomes as a result of the implementation of SWPBIS. Each of the items addressing this research question had a standard deviation that fell below 1.00, with the highest being question #4 with a standard deviation of .92. Each of the questions within this section had a mean that fell between 2.76 and 3.14, which suggests that the participants either disagreed or were neutral to the statements presented. Question #9,

More students want to be at school since SWPBIS has been implemented, had the lowest mean of 2.76, which suggests that participants are somewhat neutral that SWPBIS has helped motivate students to attend school. Question #19 SWPBIS has made a positive impact on my school, had the highest mean of 3.14, which suggests that participants are unsure as to the overall impact that SWPBIS has made on their school.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Teachers' Perceptions About Student Outcomes as a Result of SWPBIS

Question	Mean	SD
2. SWPBIS has helped reduce the number of discipline problems in my classroom.	2.82	.86
4. SWPBIS affects all students at this school.	3.11	.92
8. SWPBIS has motivated students to strive for better grades.	2.94	.77
9. More students want to be at school since SWPBIS has been implemented	2.75	.68
10. The rewards that students receive as part of SWPBIS motivate their positive behavior.	3.08	.81
19. SWPBIS has made a positive impact on my school.	3.14	.73

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 7 provides the means and standard deviations regarding teacher perceptions of bullying. Each of the items addressing this research question had a standard deviation around 1.00, with the highest being question #6 with a standard deviation of 1.29 and the lowest being question #16 with a standard deviation of .83. Each of the questions within this section had a mean that fell between 2.43 and 3.58, which suggests that the participants were somewhat neutral to the statements presented. Question #19, Bullying

at this school is a bigger problem between boys than girls, had the lowest mean of 2.43, which suggests that participants somewhat believe that bullying is a bigger problem between girls. Question #6 Bullying is a bigger problem throughout the United States today than it has been in the past, had the highest mean of 3.58, which suggests that participants are somewhat neutral as to whether or not bullying is a bigger problem today than it has been in the past.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations for Teachers' Perceptions of Bullying

Question	Mean	SD
1. Bullying is a bigger problem at my school now than it was when I first started teaching here.	2.84	1.06
3. Students are afraid to tell an adult that someone is being bullied.	2.85	1.44
5. Bullying between students occurs within the classroom.	3.35	1.04
6. Bullying is a bigger problem throughout the United States today than it has been in the past.	3.58	1.29
14. Most cases of bullying at this school are not reported.	3.09	.99
16. Bullying at this school is a bigger problem between boys than girls.	2.43	.83

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 8 provides the means and standard deviations regarding teacher perceptions of their involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS. There were two questions, #'s 17 and 18, in this section that were used as the independent variables. Question #17, I am included in the decision making process when it concerns students that I teach, had a

standard deviation of .99, and the lowest mean of 2.81, which suggests that participants are somewhat neutral in their involvement in planning student rewards as part of their school's SWPBIS. Question 184, I am included in the decision making process when it comes to students that I teach, had a standard deviation of .96, and the highest mean of 3.23, which suggests that participants are somewhat neutral in their involvement in the decision making process for the students that they teach.

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for Teachers' Perceptions About Their Involvement in the Implementation of SWPBIS

Question	Mean	SD
17. I am included in deciding reward activities for students who continue to demonstrate the desired expectation.	2.81	.99
18. I am included in the decision making process when it comes to students that I teach.	3.23	.96

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 9 provides the means and standard deviations regarding teacher perceptions of the fidelity of the implementation of SWPBIS. Each of the items addressing this research question had a standard deviation of 1.10 or lower, with the highest being question #7 with a standard deviation of .1.10. Each of the questions within this section had a mean that fell between 2.82 and 3.37, which suggests that the participants were somewhat neutral to slightly disagree the statements presented. The dependent variable, question #12, There are fewer discipline problems at school as a result of SWPBIS, had the lowest mean of 2.82, which suggests that participants are somewhat neutral on the effect that SWPBIS has had on discipline within their school. Out of the independent

variables, question #11, My school uses data to determine if behavior interventions are effective, had the lowest mean of 3.22, which suggests that the participants were unsure in regards to the use of data to make decisions surrounding students. Question #7, My school establishes clear behavioral expectations of students that are consistently enforced, had the highest mean of 3.38, which suggests that participants slightly agree that their schools set behavior expectations that are clear and consistently enforced.

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations for Teachers' Perceptions About the Fidelity of the Implementation of SWPBIS

Question	Mean	SD
7. My school establishes clear behavioral expectations of students that are consistently enforced.	3.38	1.10
11. My school uses data to determine if behavior interventions are effective.	3.23	.78
12. There are fewer discipline problems as a result of SWPBIS.*	2.82	.78
13. Students who engage in negative behaviors are provided with additional supports to help correct the behavior.	3.21	.93
15. My school regularly uses data to determine if the current reinforcers are effective.	3.08	.81

*Dependent Variable
Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Each of the survey questions were examined based upon the variable they represented within the research questions and hypotheses presented. The means of each of these questions were averaged together in order to determine the overall mean for the variable and are shown below in Table 10. These means fell between 2.97 and 3.22, which indicates that respondents felt neutral about the questions that were being asked.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations of the Research Variables Presented

Variable	Mean	SD
Teachers' Perceptions About Student Outcomes as a Result of SWPBIS	2.97	.57
Teachers' Perceptions About Bullying	3.06	.60
Teachers' Perceptions About Their Involvement in the Implementation of SWPBIS	3.02	.88
Teachers' Perceptions About the Fidelity of the Implementation of SWPBIS	3.22	.72

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Statistical Data

The collected data were further examined to determine if there was any significance between the independent and dependent variables that address each research question. Each group of questions was analyzed to determine the appropriate statistical test that needed to be utilized based upon the variables being examined. Upon this examination, the appropriate statistical test was performed using SPSS, the results were examined to determine if there was any significance present.

The first research question sought to examine if teacher demographics played a role in their perception of the student outcomes as a result of SWPBIS. H1 stated that there is a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's age, gender, level of education, and years of teaching experience and their perceptions of student outcomes as a result of SWPBIS. This question utilized a multiple linear regression using the teacher demographics as independent variables: number of years of full-time teaching

experience, gender, age, and the highest level of education completed. In addition, this question utilized teacher perceptions of the student outcomes as a result of SWPBIS as the dependent variable. The analysis shows that there was not a statistically significant relationship between teacher demographics and their perceptions of the effectiveness at SWPBIS at reducing discipline problems in the classroom (F (4,78) = .424, p=.861, R^2=.038).

Table 11 shows that teacher demographics do not have and effect on their perceptions of SWPBIS at reducing the presence of negative behaviors in the classroom. Based upon the data analysis, it was determined that there is not a statistically significant relationship present.

Table 11

Teacher Demographics and Their Role in the Perception of Student Outcomes of SWPBIS

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients	Sig.
(Constant)		.861
Years of full-time teaching experience	-.037	.555
Gender	.011	.945

Table 11 (continued).

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients	Sig.
Age		
20-29	-.106	.679
30-39	.070	.727
40-49	-.002	.992
Education: Masters and above	.186	.203

The second research question, sought to examine if the way a teacher's perceptions of their involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS has an effect on the their perception of the presence of bullying within their school. H2 stated that there is a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS and their perceptions of the presence of bullying within their school. This question utilized Pearson's Correlation comparing question #1, Bullying is a bigger problem at my school now than it was when I first started teaching here, with teacher perceptions of their involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS. As shown in Table 12, the analysis determined that there was not a statistically significant relationship present between teacher involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS and the way they perceive presence of bullying within their school (R (79) = -.080, p =.486).

Table 12

Correlation of Teacher Involvement in Implementing SWPBIS and Their Perception of the Presence of Bullying at Their School

Variable	Pearson Correlation	Sig.
Teacher's perception of their involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS	-.080	.486

The third research question sought to examine if a teacher's self-evaluation of their past experience with bullying (whether they were the bully, victim, both, bystander, or not involved) when they were a student has an effect on their perceptions of the presence of bullying within their school. H3 stated that there is a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's past experience with bullying and their perception of bullying within their school. A teacher's age and gender also has an effect on their perceptions. An ANCOVA was utilized for this question by examining a teacher's self-evaluation as the dependent variable. This question utilized teacher perceptions of bullying as the independent variable. In addition, this question further examined the data by examining the presence of a relationship by utilizing teacher's age and gender as covariates.

As described in Table 13, there was not a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's self-evaluation of their past involvement with bullying and their perceptions of bullying when looking at the data as a whole ($F(3,79) = .488$, $p=.692$). In addition, the analysis determined that neither a teacher's age nor gender had a statistically significant relationship on a teacher's perceptions of bullying.

Table 13

Teacher Self-Evaluation of Their Past Experience with Bullying and Their Perception of Bullying

Variable	df	F	Significance
Teacher's self-evaluation of their past experience with bullying	3	.488	.692
Age	1	.922	.340
Gender	1	.078	.781

The fourth research question seeks to determine if a teacher's perception of the fidelity of the implementation of interventions by all staff members, as part of SWPBIS, as an effect on reducing students' negative behaviors at school. H4 stated that there is a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's perceptions of the fidelity in the implementation of SWPBIS and their perceptions of the effect it has towards reducing students' negative behaviors. A teacher's gender and the size of the school they teach in has an effect on their perceptions. A regression was utilized for this question by examining Teacher's perceptions of the effectiveness of SWPBIS on reducing negative behaviors as the dependent variable. As described in Table 14, there is a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's perception of the fidelity of the implementation of SWPBIS and the effectiveness of SWPBIS interventions at reducing students' negative behaviors when looking at the data as a whole (F (4,78) = 16.772, p<.001, R^2=.471).

This question utilized school enrollment size, a teacher's gender and perceptions of fidelity of implementation of SWPBIS as independent variables and teacher's perceptions of SWPBIS at reducing negative student behaviors as the dependent variable.

The data shows that teacher's perceptions of the fidelity of the implementation of SWPBIS is significant to their perceptions of its effectiveness at reducing negative student behaviors ($p<.001$). The data analysis shows no additional areas of significance.

Table 14

Teacher Perceptions of Fidelity of Implementation of SWPBIS Interventions and its Effectiveness at Reducing Negative Student Behaviors at School

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients	Sig.
(Constant)		.000
Teacher perceptions of fidelity of implementation of SWPBIS	.768	<.001
Gender	.222	.157
School Enrollment		
301-450	.084	.765
600+	.259	.079

Summary

This study examined the teacher perceptions of the use of SWPBIS and its effectiveness at reducing the presence of bullying in middle schools. All variables utilized for this study was analyzed statistically using SPSS. Using an alpha of .05, only research question 4, teacher's perceptions of the fidelity in the implementation of SWPBIS and their perceptions of the effect it has toward reducing students' negative behaviors, was statistically significant. This means teachers perceive that when SWPBIS is implemented with fidelity, teachers perceive that it does have an effect at reducing negative student behaviors at school. The remaining research questions in this study were not significant using the same alpha level.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine if the implementation of SWPBIS has an effect on reducing the presence of bullying in middle schools, based upon teacher perceptions. This chapter will provide further review of this study's findings based upon the statistical analyzes conducted while also examining the limitations that exist within the study itself. Additionally, this chapter will discuss further recommendations for policy and practice, along with suggested areas for future research.

This study sought to fill an area of research that has been suggested by Good et al. (2011), Packman et al. (2005), and Pugh and Chitiyo (2012), by examining the potential presence of a relationship between the effectiveness of SWPBIS at reducing the presence of bullying. Prior research shows that when using a proactive approach that has a high level of support and fidelity has been successful in reducing the presence of negative student behaviors, while contributing to the development of an improved school climate (Flannery et al., 2009; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012; Simonsen et al., 2011; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996). This idea was replicated in this study by confirming that teachers perceived that implementation of SWPBIS with fidelity has helped reduced the presence of negative student behaviors within the school setting. However, the data from this study from this study does not support the idea presented in research by Good et al. (2011), Packman et al., (2005), and Pugh and Chitiyo (2012) that it has an effect on reducing the presence of bullying behaviors in schools. This study also examined teacher demographics to see if it has an effect on how they perceive the implementation of SWPBIS, compared to their prior experience with bullying, to see if it has an effect on

how they perceive bullying today. The data collected in this study does not support the either of these research questions in their examination of specific teacher characteristics and their perceptions of SWPBIS or bullying.

Conclusions and Discussion

This study utilized quantitative methods of measurement to examine teacher perceptions of the both SWPBIS and bullying within their schools. The data was analyzed to determine if there was a relationship between SWPBIS and teachers perceptions of bullying to see if teacher perceptions indicated a reduced presence of bullying since the implementation of SWPBIS at their school. Examining teacher perceptions of the fidelity of the implementation of SWPBIS in their school provided an insight to its overall effectiveness of reducing the presence of negative student behaviors within the school. The determination made from the examination of the effectiveness of reducing negative student behaviors could provide further support for teacher perceptions of the presence of bullying behaviors.

The survey administered for this study consisted of two sections for participant responses. The first section contained questions regarding teacher demographics, with the first two questions serving as a method to eliminate participants that did not meet the experience requirement of the study, in addition to being used as part of the study. Participants were asked to discontinue the survey if their answers to the questions regarding their full-time teaching experience if their response was not three years or more. The question asked teachers to state the number of years they have been teaching at their current school served the sole intent of participant elimination and was not use as part of the data analysis for this study. The second section of the survey contained

questions that were specific to the variables presented as part of the research questions discussed in chapter 1. These questions were presented in a mixed format, rather than categorized by the variables the represent, in order to prevent any bias from the participants as they completed each set of questions.

Research Question 1

Research question 1 asked: does a teacher's age, gender, race, level of education, and years of teaching experience affect their perceptions of student outcomes as a result of SWPBIS. Hypothesis 1 corresponded to this question by stating that a teacher's demographics does have an effect on their perceptions of SWPBIS. The results of the data analysis conducted determined that a teacher's demographics do not have an effect of their perceptions of student outcomes as a result of SWPBIS.

The literature surrounding SWPBIS does not directly address the idea presented by this research question. However, Bambara et al. (2013), Flannery et al. (2009), and Miramontes et al. (2011) discuss the importance of the faculty and staff due to the role they possess in the implementation and reinforcement of the interventions and expectations that are being utilized. Utilizing a faculty and staff buy-in of at least 80% increases the likelihood that the desired expectations would be practiced and reinforced, in addition to the success in the implementation of interventions within the classroom (Bambara et al., 2012; Flannery et al., 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996).

However, idea that teacher demographics could play a role in the implementation of SWPBIS could be potentially be explained by the Social Cognitive Theory in that the social environment can have an influence on an individual's behavior (Bandura, 2002a; Bandura, 2002b). Individuals who may hold a stronger social authority over the other

members of the group may also influence their buy-in of SWPBIS and the overall reinforcement and implementation of expectations and interventions (Bandura, 2002a; Martin, 2004; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Teachers that are new to the profession and/or new to the school could be easily influenced by the majority of the group and/or by the individuals identified as having a stronger social influence. This can affect their perception of SWPBIS along with their buy-in along with their perception of its effectiveness.

Research Question 2

Research question 2 asked: to what extent does a teacher's perception of their involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS affect their perceptions in regards to reducing the presence of bullying by using positive reinforcing behaviors. Hypothesis 2 stated that a teacher's role in the implementation of SWPBIS does have an effect on their perceptions of bullying within their school. The results of the data analysis show that a teacher's role in implementing SWPBIS does not affect their perceptions of bullying.

A teacher's role in the implementation of SWPBIS can be contributed to the overall buy-in of the faculty and staff (Bambara et al., 2012; Flannery et al., 2009; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996). Teachers who do not buy into the SWPBIS program are less likely to become involved in the implementation and decision making processes that are essential to the success of SWPBIS. The overall buy-in of the faculty and staff is crucial to the fidelity and success in the implementation of SWPBIS. The use of data as a driving factor for the decision making process for the overall success of the planned interventions and rewards being utilized (Irvin et al., 2006; Miramontes et al., 2011; Newton et al., 2011; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013).

Irvin et al. (2006) addressed the importance of the leadership team regularly reviewing the data to determine the effectiveness of the interventions, while also determining which students are in need of additional supports and/or interventions. The results of data review must be communicated to the teachers that have more direct contact with the specific students in need of further supports. This level of communication can be conducted by using an approach that involves team members and allows for their input for additional suggestions and insights on the effectiveness of those that are currently in place (Irvin et al., 2006; Newton et al., 2011; Scott et al., 2010; Simonsen & Sugai, 2013; Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Based on the data collected for this study, teachers felt neutral about their involvement in planning rewards for students demonstrating the desired positive behaviors. These results suggest that teachers may be involved, but not at the level that they perceive that they should be. A similar outcome was observed about teacher involvement in the decision making process surrounding their students. This data does not indicate how teachers perceive their level of involvement with the level of involvement that they believe they should have or would like to have.

Research Question 3

Research question 3 examines: to what extent does a teacher's perceptions regarding their past experience with bullying affect their perception of the current presence of bullying in their school. How does a teacher's gender or age have an effect on their perceptions? Hypothesis 3 addresses this research question by suggesting the presence of a significant relationship between a teacher's past experience with bullying and their perceptions of bullying within their school. This hypothesis also states that this

significance is different based on the gender or the age of the teacher. After analyzing the data, it was determined that there was not a significant relationship present and that there also was not a significant relationship by age or gender.

The idea that a teacher's attitudes towards bullying could be shaped by their past experience can be described by the Social Cognitive Theory. Their attitudes may be due to the prior experience of learned behaviors and the individual's ability to identify some of the triggers that are present in today's adolescents (Bandura & McDonald, 1963; Lin, 2010; Martin, 2004; Poulou & Norwich, 2002; Stoltz et al., 2013; Webb et al., 2010; Wood & Bandura, 1989). In addition teachers who have prior experience as the bully, victim, or bystander of bullying may relate their past relationships to those that exist within the various groups among the student body and form an opinion based on the previous connections they make with what they have observed (Bandura, 2002a; Webb et al., 2010). This connection could potentially lead to a false understanding of what is being played out among the observed student groups.

A teacher's attitude could also be explained by the General Strain Theory and again be related back to a teacher's prior experiences due to the different strains that were present in their lives as an adolescent or even currently as an adult (Agnew, 1985; Agnew et al., 2008; Baron, 2008; Hay et al., 2010; Moon & Morash, 2013; Solberg et al., 2007). However, it can lead to a false misunderstanding by the teacher because of the way the adolescent handled the strain in that particular situation may not necessarily be the same way that another individual would (Agnew, 1985; Baron, 2008; Hay et al., 2010; Moon et al., 2011; Moon & Morash, 2013).

The data collected indicated that the participants felt mostly neutral to slightly disagree on their perceptions of the presence of bullying in their school. The data analysis does not break the data down further due to an overall lack of significance, which supports that there would not be any individual differences in the outcome.

Research Question 4

Research question 4 examines: to what extent does a teacher's perceptions of the fidelity of the implementation of SWPBIS and their perceptions of the effect it has toward reducing students' negative behaviors. How does a teacher's gender or the size of the school they teach in have an effect on their perceptions? Hypothesis 4 supports this research question through the suggestion that there is a statistically significant relationship between a teacher's perceptions of the fidelity of the implementation of SWPBIS and their perceptions of the effect it has towards reducing students' negative behaviors. This hypothesis also suggests that a teacher's gender and the size of the school they teach in has an effect on their perceptions. The data analysis indicated that there was a significant relationship based upon the fidelity of the implementation of SWPBIS. However, there was not a significant relationship based on the gender or age of the teacher.

Fidelity of implementation of SWPBIS can be best explained by the consistency in the implementation if the interventions, feedback, and rewards by all faculty and staff throughout the school. Pas and Bradshaw (2012) further explained that the leadership team could evaluate this through the use of different types of assessments. Maintaining communication and being able to collaborate with all faculty and staff members can also help ensure their high level of commitment towards implementing the interventions and

enforcing the desired expectations (Flannery et al., 2009). In order to help ensure that a high level of fidelity is being maintained, then a high level of teacher buy-in is needed to ensure that everyone is on board with the strategies that are being used as part of the plan (Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Limitations

There are several limitations that were imposed upon this study. The study was conducted using middle schools in South Mississippi. These results are only a reflection of these schools and may not be generalized to all middle schools throughout the state of Mississippi or in other states. This study was limited to middle schools due to the complexity of the needs that are exhibited by students during this educational period. The complexity of these needs is due to the number changes that students experience during these years physically and educationally. Schools selected for participation in this study, regardless of their actual participation, were selected due to their geographic location and not through their specific utilization of SWPBIS or the number of years it has been in place.

This study was also limited due to the low number of responses that were received, which may be due to only including participants who had been teaching at their current school for a minimum of three years. The limitation imposed due to the low number of responses may also be contributed to the small number of principals who agreed for their schools to participate in this study. Additionally, the results of this study may be skewed because the majority of responses received were from white female teachers with less than three years of experience at their current school.

An additional limitation of this study is that it was conducted using quantitative research methods. This presented limitations to the responses that could be given by the participants. Using quantitative research methods also presented restrictions to the types of questions that could be utilized, while placing additional restrictions on the variables being examined. This study assumed that all participants were knowledgeable of SWPBIS and bullying as it relates to their school, while also assuming that teachers were actively involved in the implementation of SWPBIS.

Recommendations for Policy or Practice

Bullying is not a new issue being faced by adolescents and contrary to what is desired; it is not one that will likely ever disappear. Research has indicated that specific bullying behaviors that are being used have changed and evolved, while becoming more difficult to detect, which makes it difficult for adults to identify and intervene (Aluede et al., 2008; Juvonen & Gross, 2008; Schneider et al., 2012; Yerger & Gehret, 2011). In order for the presence of bullying to be reduced, it requires teachers and adults to further educate students on the types of behaviors are acceptable, along with teaching alternative methods to respond to difficult situations.

Utilizing SWPBIS to its full potential can benefit all stakeholders involved, in ways that are both intended and unanticipated. SWPBIS is intended to be a blueprint for success and not a rigid program to be implemented. This blueprint allows the leadership team to identify problem behaviors that they feel need to be addressed, allowing for the flexibility of the interventions to be individualized to the specific student. Additionally, SWPBIS also provides reinforcement opportunities for all students who exhibit the desired expectations. Implementing a variety of strategies and reinforcers ensures a

greater likelihood that there is something that will reach all students (Bambara et al., 2012; Chitiyo et al., 2011; Irvin et al., 2006; Pas & Bradshaw, 2012; Pugh & Chitiyo, 2012; Sugai & Horner, 2002; Walker et al., 1996).

This study provides some insight into teacher perceptions of SWPBIS and bullying, which is based upon the specific variables being examined. Teacher's responses indicated that the fidelity of the implementation of SWPBIS was an important factor towards reducing the presence of negative behaviors. This study does not indicate if there were any interventions that were more successful than others. It could potentially indicate that if SWPBIS is utilized with the intent of reducing the presence of bullying, then it needs to be implemented with fidelity in order to be successful. Research indicated that having a high level of teacher buy-in is an important factor towards achieving the desired outcome (Irvin et al., 2006; Sugai & Horner, 2002).

Recommendations for Future Research

Additional research in the use of SWPBIS to reduce the presence of bullying is suggested. The current study utilized specific variables of interest and does not necessarily encompass all aspects within them. It is suggested that future research explores additional aspects of these variables while exploring the presence of different relationships between the variables utilized in this study. Suggestions for additional variables include: types of interventions being utilized, length of time that SWPBIS has been implemented, faculty and staff buy-in rate, and community support.

This study could also examine all of grades K-12, rather than just focusing on middle schools. This data could also be broken down by grade level(s) to determine which particular grade levels that SWPBIS is most effective in reducing negative student

behaviors, including bullying. Further studies could also use the faculty and staff buy-in rate at different grade levels to determine if teachers are more likely to be onboard with SWPBIS at any particular grade levels.

This study should be implemented using a larger sample size to determine if the results could potentially be generalized. In order to obtain a larger sample size, this study should be conducted throughout the country. Expanding the study should encompass a larger variety of school demographics to ensure that the sample is a more accurate representation of the population.

Finally, this study should also utilize additional means of data collections, including the use of qualitative and historical data. Using qualitative data will allow for additional insights to be obtained allowing for the development of a better understanding of potential factors that may not have been considered. Qualitative data also allows for more flexibility in teacher responses, while allowing responses to be clarified further for understanding, which cannot be done with the use of quantitative data. The use of historical data will allow researchers to determine if the data indicates any clear indication of the onset of the implementation of SWPBIS, which could potentially be based on student discipline data. Historical data would also allow researchers to see the effects of SWPBIS at different stages of implementation, in addition to the long-term effects after several years of implementation.

Summary

This study examined teacher perceptions of the use of SWPBIS at reducing the presence of bullying in middle schools. The study was conducted using a quantitative survey instrument that was developed by the researcher. This instrument consisted of a

total of 27 questions divided into two sections. The first section contained eight demographics questions that were utilized for both determining a participant's eligibility and as part of the data analysis. The second section of the instrument contained 19 questions regarding SWPBIS and bullying, these questions were mixed to reduce the potential for participant bias during their completion of the survey. The survey instrument was reviewed by a panel of experts to determine validity before a pilot study was conducted to determine its reliability.

This study examined four research questions, which were developed by the researcher:

1. To what extent does a teacher's age, gender, level of education, and years of teaching experience affect their perceptions of student outcomes as a result of SWPBIS?
2. To what extent does a teacher's perception of their involvement in the implementation of SWPBIS affect their perceptions in regard to reducing the presence of bullying by using positive reinforcing behaviors?
3. To what extent does a teacher's perceptions regarding their past experience with bullying affect their perception of the current presence of bullying in their school? How does a teacher's gender or age have an effect on their perceptions?
4. To what extent does a teacher's perceptions of the fidelity of the implementation of SWPBIS and their perceptions of the effect it has on reducing students' negative behaviors? How does a teacher's gender or the size of the school they teach in have an effect on their perceptions?

SPSS was utilized to analyze the data from the full survey, using multiple linear regression, ANCOVA, and Pearson's Correlation to determine the statistical significance of the data in relation to the research questions presented. The data analysis determined that research question 4 was the only question that had statistical significance. This significance was found in the area of teacher's perceptions of the fidelity of implementation of SWPBIS within their school. Despite the lack of significance in other areas, this study can help school leaders understand the benefits regarding the consistency needed in order to maintain fidelity. This study can also be utilized by future researchers to obtain insights and suggestions for future research questions associated with this area of research.

APPENDIX A

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

This questionnaire is about how you see School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) and bullying within your school. Please keep your school in mind as you answer the questions in order to maintain consistency of your responses.

Part A:
Demographic Information

Directions: Circle one response for each of the following questions.

1. Years of full-time teaching experience: _____

2. Years of full-time teaching experience at this school: _____

3. Gender: Male Female

4. Age: 20-29 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+

5. How many students are enrolled at your school?

   0-150 151-300 301-450 451-600 601+

6. What is your highest level of education completed?

   Bachelor Master Specialist Doctorate

7. How would you have considered yourself when you were a student?

   Bully Victim Both Bystander Not Involved

If your response to questions 1 or 2 is less than 3 years, do not continue on to the next part of this questionnaire. Please return it to the designated individual

Part B:

Perceptions of SWPBIS and Bullying

Directions: Circle one response for each item to indicate your agreement to the statement as it applies to your school.

		Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
1.	Bullying is a bigger problem at my school now than it was when I first started teaching here.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	SWPBIS has helped reduce the number of discipline problems in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Students are afraid to tell an adult that someone is being bullied.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	SWPBIS affects all students at this school.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Bullying between students occurs within the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Bullying is a bigger problem throughout the United States today than it has been in the past.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	My school establishes clear behavioral expectations of students that are consistently enforced.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	SWPBIS has motivated students to strive for better grades.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	More students want to be at school since SWPBIS has been implemented.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	The rewards that students receive as part of SWPBIS motivate their positive behavior.	1	2	3	4	5

11.	My school uses data to determine if behavior interventions are effective.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	There are fewer discipline problems at my school as a result of SWPBIS.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Students who engage in negative behaviors are provided with additional supports to help correct the behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Most cases of bullying at this school are not reported.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	My school regularly uses data to determine if the current reinforcers are effective.	1	2	3	4	5
16.	Bullying at this school is a bigger problem between boys than girls	1	2	3	4	5
17.	I am included in planning reward activities for students who continue to demonstrate the desired expectations.	1	2	3	4	5
18.	I am included in the decision making process when it concerns students that I teach.	1	2	3	4	5
19.	SWPBIS has made a positive impact on my school	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS

Kristine M. Harper

Superintendent
School District

Dear Superintendent,

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi under Dr. David Lee. I am writing to request your permission to distribute questionnaires to your teachers at your districts middle schools. The information that I am collecting with these questionnaires will be shared with my dissertation committee and will be used in my dissertation.

My research is seeking to analyze teacher perceptions of School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) and the effect that it has on reducing the presence of bullying among junior high school students. The data being collected with these surveys will remain confidential and will not identify any teacher, school, or district. This research will not interfere with classroom instruction or with the daily operations of participating schools and teachers. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. I plan to begin collecting data in November 2014 and to be completed by May 2015. Participation is completely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice to the participant. There is no inherent risk associated with being a participant of this survey. All surveys collected will be destroyed by a shredder upon completion of the study. The purpose of this study is to determine if the implementation of SWPBIS has an effect on combating the presence of bullying in schools.

In order to conduct this research I am required to follow all of the ethical guidelines of research as proposed by the Institutional Review Board's Human Subject Committee at the University of Southern Mississippi. My application to this committee is pending the receipt of your consent letter.

Thank you for your time and consideration in allowing me to collect data from the teachers in your district. If your decision is to grant me permission, please respond on your district's letterhead. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Kristine M. Harper

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE EMAIL TO PRINCIPALS

Dear Principal,

I am a doctoral candidate at the University of Southern Mississippi under Dr. David Lee. I recently received permission from your superintendent to collect research data from your school. I am writing to request your permission to distribute questionnaires to the teachers at your schools. The information that I am collecting with these questionnaires will be shared with my dissertation committee and will be used in my dissertation.

My research is seeking to analyze teacher perceptions of School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) and the effect that it has on reducing the presence of bullying among junior high school students. The data being collected with these surveys will remain confidential and will not identify any teacher, school, or district. This research will not interfere with classroom instruction or with the daily operations of participating schools and teachers. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. Participation is completely voluntary and participants may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice to the participant. There is no inherent risk associated with being a participant of this survey. All surveys collected will be destroyed by a shredder upon completion of the study.

In order to conduct this research I am required to follow all of the ethical guidelines of research as proposed by the Institutional Review Board's Human Subject Committee at the University of Southern Mississippi. I am attaching a copy of the IRB approval letter for your review.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I hope you will allow me to attend a faculty meeting to distribute and collect my survey, or help me identify a designated individual to do this on my behalf. Please indicate your approval by responding to this email.

Sincerely,
Kristine M. Harper

APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL

THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 15020901
PROJECT TITLE: Teacher Perceptions of the Use of School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports at Reducing the Presence of Bullying in Middle Schools
PROJECT TYPE: New Project
RESEARCHER(S): Kristine Harper
COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Education and Psychology DEPARTMENT: Educational Leadership and School Counseling
FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: N/A
IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review Approval
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 02/10/2015 to 02/09/2016

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX E

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Consent to Participate Form

My completion of the attached survey indicates that I have read the information provided below and have decided to participate in the study titled **"Teacher Perceptions of School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and its effect on Bullying in Middle Schools"** to be conducted at my school.

I understand the purpose of this project will be to measure the perceptions of middle school teachers, who have been teaching full-time at their current school for at least three years, on the use of School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions ant Supports (SWPBIS) and whether or not it has an effect on reducing the presence of bullying in middle schools.

I will be participating in this study by completing the attached survey and returning it sealed to the designated individual in the envelope provided.

The potential benefits of this study includes the further exploration of the benefits provided by the use of SWPBIS and its potential use for reducing the presence of bullying in schools.

I understand that by completing the survey, I agree that my responses will be used as part of this study. If I decide to discontinue participation during the completion of the attached questionnaire, I must return the survey and notify the designated individual upon return.

At no time during the study will participants be asked to identify themselves. The only data collected for identification purposes are the demographic questions asked within the survey to identify subgroups within the data. The return procedure includes sealing your completed survey in the provided envelope to further ensure anonymity in order to prevent bias towards volunteer participation.

All information collected for this study will be used for data analysis. This information may potentially be used for publication and presentation. There are no risks or inconveniences anticipated to individuals who volunteer to participate in this study. Participation is completely voluntary and will not be used in conjunction with a participant's evaluation or employment status. If a participant elects to withdraw their permission prior to or while completing the survey, they must notify the researcher, or designated individual at their school, of this decision.

If further information is needed in regards to this specific research study, I can contact Kristine Harper at 817-946-9074 or kristine.harper@eagles.usm.edu.

APPENDIX F

SURVEY SCRIPT

Today you will be take a short survey about your perceptions of the use of School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and the effects that it has on reducing the presence of bullying in your school.

For the purpose of this survey, the following definitions will be used:

- School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports which refers to the school level of planned interventions provided to address and prevent negative behaviors that are exhibited by students at school, in order to create a positive and safer school climate. This also encompasses rewards and positive reinforcers that are in place for students who demonstrate the desired positive behaviors; this may also be referred to as your school's Renaissance program.

- Bullying refers to intentional repetitive negative behavior that is engaged in by an individual or group and is directed towards another person. Bullying may occur verbally, physically, electronically (cyberbullying), or through the use of rumors and social isolation (also called relational aggression).

Each participant has been given a copy of an informed consent letter for your review and to keep for your records. By completing the survey, you give consent for your responses to be used as part of this research study. To complete this survey, please select one response for each of the questions. Once you have completed the survey, please place inside the provided envelope, seal, and return to me. If you decide to withdraw your consent at any time while completing the survey, please seal it in the envelope provided and notify me upon return so that it may be marked and excluded from the data analysis.

If you have any questions, please contact the researcher using the contact information found at the bottom of your consent letter.

Thank you so much for your participation.

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